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Agricultural activities begin

HUBBALLI/MYSURU
The State is hoping for bountiful monsoon this year after last year's unprecedented drought that accentuated farmers' distress owing to crop loss. » Page 6

Prajwal passport: 'No response yet'

BENGALURU
G. Parameshwara, Home Minister, on Sunday said the State had not received any official response from the Centre on its request seeking cancellation of the diplomatic passport of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing multiple allegations of sexual abuse. » Page 6

Six killed in road accident

SHIVAMOGGA
As many as six persons, including a child, died on the spot after the car by which they were travelling met with an accident near Echanahalli on the outskirts of Hassan early on Sunday. » Page 3

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGES 4 & 5

Knight Riders' night out

Back with a bang: Kolkata Knight Riders players celebrate their third IPL title after a thumping eight-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in Chennai on Sunday. KKR had won in 2012 and 2014, with its maiden triumph too coming at the MAC Stadium. R. RAGU (REPORT: PAGE 17)

Rajkot inferno toll climbs to 33; more than 15 persons still missing

Mahesh Langa
AHMEDABAD

At least 33 people were killed in the fire that broke out on Saturday evening at TRP Gaming Zone in Rajkot. More than 15 are still missing in what the Gujarat High Court called a "man-made disaster", taking *suo motu* cognisance of the matter and posting it for a hearing on Monday.

Neither the State government nor the local administration have given any figures about the casualties or number of missing people since Saturday night. There is also no official data on the total number of people present inside the building when the fire broke out. However, local media and sources have confirmed that the death toll has climbed to 33.

Fire aftermath: Earthmovers remove the debris of the gutted gaming zone in Rajkot, on Sunday. VIJAY SONEJI

The victims included five people from one family, as well as Vivek and Khushali Dusara, a young couple who got engaged just a few days ago, and are now missing at the game zone, along with their sister-in-law. Families are awaiting confirmation that their 'missing' loved ones have died, with DNA samples sent to the Gandhinagar Forensic Science Laboratory.

Witnesses and relatives of the victims said that there was no equipment available to fight the fire, and no fire alarm, raising serious questions about the role of local authorities who allowed the sprawling amusement park to function without any checks.

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Seven babies killed in Delhi hospital fire

Five more babies receiving treatment; owner, doctor on duty arrested; police say hospital's licence had expired and it allowed for only five beds

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

Seven newborn babies were charred to death after a fire broke out in a children's hospital at Vivek Vihar in east Delhi on Saturday night. One of the dead infants was 25 days old, while the other six were just 15 days old. Five babies are undergoing treatment.

The police said the hospital's licence had expired. The owner of the hospital, along with the doctor on duty, was arrested on Sunday evening after they went missing for over 12 hours.

They have been booked under Sections 336 (negligence), 304 A (culpable homicide), and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

A magisterial inquiry has been set up to look into the causes of the fire and formulate strategies to prevent such occurrences.

The private hospital, New Born Baby Care Hospital, is owned by Naveen Khichi, who holds an MD in paediatric medicine, and his wife, Jagriti, a dentist.

Apart from the seven who died, five babies admitted to the facility were put at risk by the flames.

Harrowing tragedy: The police inspect the children's hospital that was gutted at Vivek Vihar in New Delhi on Sunday. R.V. MOORTHY

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Surendra Choudhury told *The Hindu* that the building had no fire extinguishers or emergency doors.

"The licence of the hospital had expired in March 2024. Though the licence was issued for only five beds, there were 12 beds when we inspected the site," he said, adding that Akash, the doctor on duty, only had a degree in Ayurvedic medicine and was not qualified to provide neonatal intensive care.

Short circuit suspected

A senior Delhi Police official told *The Hindu* that while the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, preliminary assessment suggests that it might have been due to a short circuit, with the presence of excessive number of oxygen cylinders exacerbating the situation.

The police control room received a call around 11.30 p.m. on Saturday, informing it of the fire. A senior police officer told *The Hindu* that though the police reached the hospital shortly after the call, no staff members were present at the spot.

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Hamas launches attack on Tel Aviv

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

Hamas fired a barrage of rockets from Gaza that set off air-raid sirens as far away as Tel Aviv for the first time in months on Sunday in a show of resilience more than seven months into Israel's massive air, sea and ground offensive.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage in what appeared to be the first long-range rocket attack from Gaza since January.

The Hamas's military wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, took responsibility for the attack.

Palestinian militants have sporadically fired rockets and mortar rounds at communities along the Gaza border, and the military arm of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group later on Sunday said it fired rockets at nearby communities.

The Israeli military said eight projectiles crossed into Israel after being launched from the area of the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where Israeli forces recently launched an incursion. It said "a number" of the projectiles were intercepted.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was to convene his war cabinet on Sunday to discuss the latest efforts towards a Gaza truce and hostage release deal.

Earlier in the day, aid trucks entered Gaza from southern Israel under a new agreement to bypass the Rafah crossing.

PUNISHING HAMAS
» PAGE 10
WAR CABINET
» PAGE 16

Kerala seeks fresh terms of reference for new dam

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

The Kerala government will seek fresh terms of reference from the Expert Appraisal Committee of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for conducting an environment impact assessment (EIA) for a new dam at Mullaperiyar as the earlier terms expire in May.

The State will contend at the May 28 meeting of the committee that seeking fresh terms of reference would not violate any Supreme Court order as the court had favoured an EIA by the State government.

The move assumes significance as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has written to Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav against the Centre's stand of considering Kerala's proposal. The proposed site of the new dam is in the Periyar Tiger Reserve. Any construction there would require several environmental clearances, including of the National Board for Wildlife and the Supreme Court.

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Remal makes landfall; 1 lakh evacuated in Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The severe cyclonic storm Remal started its landfall process between Sagar Island in West Bengal and Khepupara in Bangladesh around 9.15 p.m. on Sunday, as it intensified and moved northwards. By 11.30 p.m, the eye of the cyclone touched the land.

To preven loss of life, the West Bengal administration had evacuated people from low-lying and coastal areas of South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur to storm shelters. By 3 p.m., over one lakh people were shifted from coastal and vulnerable areas.

The India Meteorological Department has issued a red alert cyclone warning for the West Bengal coastline. DEBASISH BHADURI

The storm has resulted in disruptions in air, rail, and road transportation in Kolkata and other parts of south Bengal.

Eastern and Southeastern Railways cancelled several trains for Sunday and Monday. Ferry services in Kolkata and the Sundarbans had been suspended. The Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport suspended flight operations for 21 hours from Sunday noon, affecting 394 flights in both international and domestic sectors. The Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata suspended cargo and container handling operations for 12 hours from Sunday evening.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting to review response and preparedness for the cyclonic storm. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged people to remain indoors. Governor C.V. Ananda Bose also called an emergency meeting to ascertain cyclone preparedness.

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SEVERAL SEEK SHELTER
» PAGE 16

Shyaam Nikhil's fascinating saga to become India's 85th Grandmaster

It was a sustained and dedicated effort, over dozen years, by the 32-year-old player who had overcome close misses and heartbreaks before achieving the elusive third and final GM norm earlier this month

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

S. Prasanna Venkatesan

Just like Robert the Bruce, the King of Scotland, was inspired by a spider persistently attempting to spin a web in a cave, India's 85th and latest chess Grandmaster (GM) Shyaam Nikhil, at one point in his 12-year wait for his third and final GM norm, was inspired by a crab on the Sri Lankan seashore.

Drawing inspiration

"I take inspiration from whatever I look around. For example, I won the Commonwealth Chess Championship in Sri Lanka in 2022. The initial stages weren't so good for me – I drew and then lost my second round. And then I started to win some rounds.

"So, one day I was standing on the seashore. I was just looking at the waves and I saw these crabs on the shore. There was this crab trying to dig and keep something. Though waves came and closed it (the hole), it resumed digging and kept on doing it even after the waves receded.

"It felt like that I was getting a message from that. I felt this way: 'Just keep doing your work. Whatever the disturbances or external things, don't take those into consideration.'

"So, I draw inspiration from all the incidents I look around, and this way I keep myself motivated all the time," said Shyaam over a Zoom call.

He also mentioned that he had a lot of people around him 'radiating' positivity. For instance, his parents have made him feel motivated by narrating stories of how they had overcome their own struggles.

"See, there's 12 years of struggle for a norm. It's not an easy thing to cope up with," said Shyaam.

Elusive

Shyaam, 32, had become an International Master (IM) at 18 in 2010. He had secured the first two GM norms in successive months in 2011 and surpassed the 2500-mark in the Elo rating in 2012. But it was then that the third and final GM norm started becoming elusive.

It became so elusive that he, who was initially very confident of claiming it, somehow wanted to get done with it.

With time, someone casually suggesting in wonder that he had been taking so long for one norm became inconvenient.

Even his mother's appreciative WhatsApp messages during the course of the Dubai Police Global Chess Challenge, where he finally managed to get his third GM norm this month, made him feel that his mother was expecting him to achieve the norm and thus created pressure for him.

"My mom doesn't sleep. She waits all night expecting my result. She just looks at the evaluation bar online and she knows what is happening in the game.

"So, after I finish every round, she used to send me a message, like a sticker which would read 'Super.' Every day and night, there were conversations like this. So, till the end, the 'Super' continued and I managed to finish my norm there.

"See, actually, it creates some pressure. It is a support, but you can feel that expectation that she is waiting for my result. And if I lose, it is more painful. Rather than the game, the emotional connect is a bit more painful. There were many moments like this. Because the misses were so many, right?"

There were indeed a few agonisingly close misses. Before the Dubai event, there was a tournament in France where he missed the norm by half-a-point. In the Dubai Open, where he surpassed the 2500 Elo mark in 2012, he couldn't manage a win needed in one of the rounds.

He said the miss in the 2020 Delhi Open was particularly heartbreaking. "I was playing against Russian GM Pavel Ponkratov. If I had won that game, I would have got my GM title and also finished second in the tournament. The prize money was quite large (₹4 lakh). So much was at stake.

"I had a completely winning position. Then, there were so many people around the table. I'm not saying it's a distraction. But it usually happens when there is so much tension on the board.

"It's not like cricket. Only when the crucial moments are there, people will be around. I really don't know what happened and what went wrong, I lost the game on time. That was more painful."

Had he won, he would have become India's 66th GM. If he had succeeded in 2012, he would have been the country's 28th GM.

There was this one time in India in 2014 when he had in fact secured his final GM norm, but it wasn't counted due to a technicality.

"I needed a foreign norm. Like, it's not necessarily to be played abroad. The majority of your opponents should be from foreign countries. Out of nine rounds, you must meet at least 4-5 foreigners."

Shyaam, who hails from Nagercoil, was without the financial means to support his participation in foreign tournaments until he was employed by ICF in 2017. His father was working with the State Express Transport Corporation (SETC) and his mother's a homemaker.

"I have two younger brothers. The initial stages (in chess) weren't so clear at all. I used to play only the district tournaments. After that, I started to get selected and played at the State level, which in itself was a difficult thing when I started.

"I had to travel some 12 to 14 hours to reach Chennai. So, it wasn't easy at the earlier stages. My father used to come with me. After a while, I shifted my home to Madurai for training. And then to Chennai. After finishing school, I went back to Nagercoil for college.

"After 2012, we got to know there were many European tournaments. And there were some exposure trips. The government will send you on an exposure trip. Sometimes I got the chance. Other than that, I wasn't able to go since I didn't have that bank statement. You need to show enough funds in your account, which I didn't have. I was getting prize money and all. But that wasn't sufficient to go abroad. If you go abroad, you can play some 3-4 tournaments in a row, which I couldn't afford at that time.

"Only after joining Railways, I was able to play abroad. Since I'm a government employee, they gave an NOC. With all these documents, it was easy to get a visa and travel abroad and play, which was a turning point in my life. Because of that, I got to improve a lot in the rating."

Manual training

Growing up in a generation when the internet and chess engines weren't as prevalent as they are today, Shyaam had to largely train manually by playing.

"When I reached 2375 Elo rating, I didn't even have a computer. I won a tournament in Jaipur with a prize money of some ₹77,000 or something like that. With that prize money, my parents got me a desktop.

"And at that time, there were chess engines like Fritz. It's now considered to be very weak. There was no Stockfish.

"The internet was also not that popular. There were internet centres. Online chess was not that popular. In the initial stages, it was completely on-board practice. In Madurai, I was training with Ghouse Kamarudeen in his academy.

"There were so many other chess players there who are currently not playing. They've left chess, but at that time, they were very supportive. We were there from nine in the morning to six in the evening, playing tournaments, games, and solving positions. It was all about chess, full-time.

"There wasn't much access to databases and all. We had a notebook for openings and used to write the moves from the ECO (Encyclopedia of Chess Openings). We also had to write all the variations in the notebook and used to memorise those as well. The playing also helped a lot. Like, we used to play from morning till evening. Even after going home, if I closed my eyes, I would see the chessboard."

Reading it up

He has benefited by reading Mikhail Tal's, Garry Kasparov's, and Bobby Fischer's books.

"I've read *My Great Predecessors* by Kasparov. When I made my first GM norm, I needed a win with black (pieces) against a GM from Poland. He hadn't even lost a single game in the tournament with white pieces. He had drawn some games, but he'd never lost.

"He played the English opening. I had seen Kasparov's game with a similar pawn structure, which helped me win that round.

"I have studied *My 60 Memorable Games* by Fischer. I'm now looking into a recent book on how to play unconventional chess."

With the GM title having been ticked off, Shyaam feels like he is "beginning" his chess career. He mentioned that he has managed to enter the "elite zone" and now has the goal of improving his Elo rating to 2600 to reach the 'Super GM' level.

THE GIST

- Shyaam, who had become an International Master in 2010, secured the first two GM norms in in 2011 and surpassed the 2500-mark in the Elo rating in 2012
- Growing up in a generation when the internet and chess engines weren't as prevalent as they are today, he had to largely train manually by playing
- The Grandmaster feels he is "beginning" his chess career and has managed to enter the "elite zone"

UGC allows 18 State universities to collaborate with foreign varsities

Academic and research collaboration, as well as the mobility of students and faculty members through joint degree and dual degree programmes, is expected to help Indian higher educational institutions achieve top global rankings

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, is one of the 18 universities. FILE PHOTO

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved a proposal for 18 State universities and higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Karnataka to collaborate with foreign institutions to offer twinning, joint degree, or dual degree programmes.

Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, National Law School of India University (NLSIU), University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru, University of Mysore, Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), and private universities such as Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Deemed to be University) and Christ (Deemed to be University) are among the 18 that have received approval for collaboration with foreign universities.

Courses

Courses such as psychology, nursing, engineering, information technology, biotechnology, law, human rights, arts and humanities, and others have received the nod.

Under the National Education Policy (NEP-2020), the UGC notified the University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2022, on May 2, 2022. These regulations promote enhanced academic collaboration with foreign higher educational institutions, leading to academic and research excellence in Indian HEIs. Academic and research collaboration, as well as the mobility of students and faculty members through joint degree and dual degree programmes, is expected to help Indian HEIs achieve higher global rankings.

Twinning programme

A twinning programme will be a collaborative arrangement in which students enrolled with an Indian HEI will study partly in India and partly in the foreign HEI and then be awarded a degree by the Indian HEI.

For a joint degree programme, the curriculum will be designed jointly by the collaborating Indian and foreign HEIs. Upon completion of the programme, the Indian HEI and the collaborating foreign HEI will award the degree with a single certificate. The dual degree programme will be jointly designed and offered by the Indian and foreign HEIs in the same disciplines/subject areas and at the same level. The degrees for such a programme will be conferred by the Indian and foreign HEIs, separately and simultaneously, upon completion of the degree requirements of both institutions. This will not be construed as two-degree programmes in separate disciplines/subject areas and/or levels being pursued simultaneously.

However, the UGC also has some conditions for collaboration; Indian HEIs shall obtain the approval of its appropriate authority, like the Board of Governors/Board of Management/Syndicate/Executive Council, for academic collaboration with any Foreign HEIs. The Indian HEIs will have to seek the necessary approval from the relevant statutory councils/bodies before entering into collaboration in technical, medical, legal, agricultural and other professional programmes.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, S. Vidyashankar, Vice-Chancellor of the VTU, said, "Preparations have been made for the MoU with foreign universities. Earlier, we had entered into agreements with some foreign universities regarding teaching exchange and research. We also allowed our students to do internships and project work at any university in the world. Now, we have taken steps to sign an agreement for the twinning programme with Temple University of Philadelphia, U.S. Two rounds of talks have already been held, and the third round will be held soon. In addition, an agreement will be made with foreign universities to come to India and offer twinning programmes."

THiS institutions achieve good results in CBSE and ICSE classes 10 and 12 exams

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The schools that are part of The Hindu in School (THiS) programme have excelled in the CBSE, ICSE, and ISC classes 10 and 12 examinations, the results of which were announced recently.

In CBSE Class 10 exam, Auden School, Hosakerehalli, Bengaluru, has got 100% results with 25 distinctions and five first classes. Kushal, who secured 94.83%, has emerged as the school topper.

In Sri Vidyalakshmi International School, BEL Layout, Anjananagara, 24 students secured distinctions and 23 students got first class marks.

Dev In National School, Sahakarnagar, has achieved 100% results with 57 distinctions and five first classes. Nishanth G.S. has secured 97.6% marks and emerged as the school topper.

In ICSE Class 10 results, Bunt's Sangha RNS Vidyaniketan, Vijayanagar, has got 100% results and 116 students got high distinctions and 23 got distinctions. Khushi M. has become the school topper by securing 98%.

Carmel High School, Basaveshwaranagar, has got 100% results with 66 distinctions among 85 students who appeared for the examination. Yash Chordia has secured 97.8% marks and has emerged as the school topper.

This year, 27 students of VLS International School, Basaveshwaranagar, have achieved distinctions and Supreeth N. has become the school topper by securing 97.4% marks.

Indian Public School, Turuvekere, Tumakuru district, has achieved 100% results and Pranav Y. has bagged the school topper cap with 99% marks.

Among 137 students who appeared for the exam in St. Francis De Sales Public School, Hebbagodi, as many as 126 got distinctions. K. Harshavardhan has secured 99.6% marks and emerged as the school topper.

In ISC (Class 12) results, among 25 students who appeared for the exam, 23 got distinctions. Sanjana Atreya G.S. has secured 95.3% marks and become the school topper.

In Auden Public School, Giringar, as many as 20 students have scored above 90% and 20 students above 80%. Harshith Gowda B.M., who secured 98%, has emerged as the school topper.

In Presidency School, Nandini Layout, among the 146 students who appeared for the exam, 141 got distinctions. Ruhi Deshpande has emerged as the school topper with 99% score.

Lady Vailankanni High School, Varthur, has got eight distinctions and 19 first classes. Harshitha R. has got 96% marks and become the school topper.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
STATE HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
Office of The Chief Project Officer, Project Implementation Unit,
State Highway Development Project, PWD Annexe Building, K.R.Circle, Bengaluru-560001.
Website: www.shdpkar.in e-Mail: cepiushdp@gmail.com

No: CPO/SHDP/Tech/Phase-5 Stage-1/Tender Notification/2024-25/437 Date: 24.05.2024

Tender Notification for Providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) Services for the works taken up under SHDP- Phase 5 Stage-1

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: 06/2023-24 Dated: 24-05-2024 (2nd Call)

On behalf of Governor of Karnataka, he Chief Engineer (Additional Charge), Project Implementation Unit, State Highway Development Project, Bengaluru invites tender for Providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for the works taken up under SHDP-Phase 5 Stage-1 vide G.O No: PWD 304 EAP 2023 Bengaluru, Dated: 29.02.2024, as per Standard Tender Document (KC-4) and SHDP norms in two cover system. The tenderers may submit tenders for the work given in the table through KPP portal of the Government of Karnataka (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).

Sl. No.	Name of Work	No of Package's	Amount put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (Rs.in lakhs)	Duration
1	Head of Account 5054-03-337-0-18-154 Package wise details may be obtained through KPP Portal	2	Package wise amount put to tender maybe obtained through KPP Portal	Package wise EMD may be obtained through KPP Portal	15 months

TENDER PROCESS DETAILS: (1) Tender documents can be downloaded in KPPP Portal from: **24.05.2024** to **04.06.2024** upto 15:30 hours. **(2)** Pre-Tender meeting on: **30.05.2024** at 11:30 hours (O/o Chief Project Officer, SHDP, Bangalore). **(3)** Last date & time for receipt of Tenders: **04.06.2024** upto 16:30 hours. **(4)** Date & time for opening of Technical Bid: **08.06.2024** at 11:30 hours. **(5)** Tentative Date & time for opening of Financial Bid: **15.06.2024** at 11.30 hours. **(6)** Corrigendums, addendums and modifications in notification if any will be published in KPP portal only. Registered Consultancy firms in KPP Portal are eligible to participate in tender.

Any information about the tender's can be obtained from O/o The Chief Project Officer, Project Implementation Unit, State Highway Development Project, Bengaluru during office hours on all working days and also through **support@eprochelpdesk.com** KPP Portal helpdesk telephone nos are +91-8046010000 / +91-8068948777.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Additional Charge),
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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, LAKSHMAMMA, W/o. Shivaramaiah, aged 77 years, Residing at No. 172, ISEC Road, Teachers Colony, 1st Stage, Nagarabhavi, Bengaluru-560072, have changed my name to Lakshmamma Karejavanahalli Linge Gowda, vide affidavit dated: 25.05.2024 before Notary Y.R. Chandrasekar Bengaluru.

I, GAJANAN Gopalakrishn Gowda, aged 45 years, S/o. Gopalakrishna, Residing at No. 87, 6th Cross, Basaveshwara Nagara, B.M. Road, Channapatna Town -562160, Ramanagara District, Karnataka, have changed my name from Gawada Gajanan Gopalkrishna to Gajanan Gopalakrishn Gowda, vide affidavit dated: 23.05.2024 before notary Vedavathi . T.D., Channapatna.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

I, NAMITA Karmakar Mother of No 18004958N Hav Sanjib Karmakar. Resident of village– Jhalda,Post–Jhalda,Dist–Purulia,State–West Bengal, Pin–723202 have changed my date of birth from 04.11.1971 to 23.10.1970 vide affidavit dated 25.05.2024 sworn before advocate and notary public Uday Kumar. K Bengaluru.

REAL ESTATE

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MEDICAL

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(a unit of InStem Bengaluru) CMC Campus, Bagayam, Vellore-632 002.
Job Code: 1540
The Centre for Stem Cell Research (CSCR), a unit of inStem Bengaluru, in collaboration with the Department of Biotechnology (Government of India) and the Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore, invites applications from Veterinarians.
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For more information and application forms visit
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LAST DATE: 2 WEEKS FROM THE DATE OF ADVERTISEMENT.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-Tender Notice No. CPMGSU-EPC-2024-01
Dated : 17-05-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Construction of Quarters and Service Buildings, dismantling of the structures and Earth in Formation for Embankment and Cutting including extensions of bridges, retaining walls and allied works, electrical works and telecom works (PHASE-1 DEVELOPMENT OF MYSURU RAILWAY STATION)	Rs. 2,14,70,00,000/-

Last date for submission of bids:
Upto 16:00 Hrs. on 05-07-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Chief Project Manager/GSU
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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, **B.K. Venugopal,** Son of Late H.P. Krishna Reddy, Aged about 54 years, Residing at No.28D, 1st Main, Vivekananda Layout, Outer Ring Road, Marathahalli, Bangalore-560037 do hereby state that, I have lost the Original Sale Deed dated 20.01.2012, vide document bearing No.336/2012 in respect of Property bearing Survey Number 603, measuring 01 Acre 21 Guntas, situated at **Thavarakarai Village and Panchayathi, Denkanikottai Sub Registrar District, Denkanikottai Taluk, Krishnagiri District.** I have lodged a police complaint on 24.05.2024 at Attibele Police Station. Whoever finds the documents kindly handover the documents to any of us at our Advocate having office below. The public is hereby cautioned not to transact with anybody claiming to be the owners of the said Survey Number holding the lost original document. Any transactions made without our knowledge will be at their cost.

M/s. Jury Legal Solutions,
Advocates
No. 8, 14th Cross, 14th Main, 4th Sector, HSR Layout, Bangalore-560102.
M : 9902195500 / 8861214897
Bangalore Date : 26-05-2024

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:
E-Tender Notice No.: HE-TRD-2024-25-OT-09
Dated. 22-05-2024

Item of work	Approx. Value
Comprehensive Annual Maintenance of SCADA system for SYNERGY make remote terminal units of Ballari-Hosapete as per RDSO Specification No. TI/SPC/RCC/SCADA /0133 and remote terminal units of Ballari-Rayadurg for ASHIDA make as per RDSO Specification No.TI/SPC/RCC/SCADA /0133 for 4 years.	Rs. 62,35,600/-

Last date for submission of bids :
Upto 13:00 Hrs. on 14-06-2024

E-Tender Notice No.: HE-TRD-2024-25-OT-10
Dated. 22-05-2024

Item of work	Approx. Value
Supply, Design and Commissioning of Auxiliary Transformer for interlocking facility to LC No. 7, 76, 86, 4, 115,101 of Hubballi Division in South Western Railway.	Rs. 43,08,213.49

Last date for submission of bids :
Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 14-06-2024

E-Tender Notice No.: HE-TRD-2024-25-OT-11
Dated. 22-05-2024

Item of work	Approx. Value
OHE modification for the Construction of RUB at km 7/780 Ballari-Rayadurg Section and RUB at Km No. 151/908 Kariganuru-Papinayakanahalli Section of Hubballi Division.	Rs. 26,18,033.80

Last date for submission of bids :
Upto 13:00 Hrs. on 14-06-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / TRD
PUB/108/AAD/PRB/SWR/2024-25 Hubballi
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my clients have entered into an agreement to purchase the Schedule property from its owners **SRI.B.R.RAJA** S/o Late B.A.Raghu and her sister **SMT.R.V.PAVITHRA,** residing at No.515/3, Middle School Road, Viveshwarapuram, Bengaluru - 560 004.

Apart from the said owners, if any other person/s have any manner of claim or interest or demand over the Schedule property or any part thereof by way of sale, lease, mortgage, gift, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, pre-emption or otherwise howsoever, they are hereby requested to file their objection/s (along with the photocopies of the documents on which they are relying), with the undersigned within **14 days** from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.2 (PID No.50-1-2) and Municipal No.2/1 (PID No.50-1-2/1), measuring East to West 80ft and North to South 40ft, in all measuring 3200 Sq.ft., together with a building thereon, situated at Middle School Road, V.V.Puram, Bangalore and bounded on:

East by : Conservancy
West by : Middle School Road
North by : House of Thammaiah
South by : House of Lakshmana

Sd/- **S.F. GOUTAM CHAND**
Advocate
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560 004.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **Sri. C. ChethaKumar** S/o Channappa, Having his Office at No.96/4/6, 2nd Floor, 5th Main, Navyanagar, MCHS Layout, Jakkur Main Road, Near Kempegowda Circle, Bengaluru – 560064, intends to purchase Schedule Properties morefully described hereinunder, from its present Owner Sri. Ashwatha Narayanappa, aged about 85 years, S/o late Krishnappa, residing at No.8, Narayana Nest Park Road, Hebbala Kempapuru, Chinnappa Layout, Bengaluru-560024.

SCHEDULE PROPERTIES

ITEM No.1:
All that piece and parcel of the immovable residential vacant Site bearing No.3, Old Katha No.105/345, now comes under Yelahanka B.B.M.P. Limits, Ward No.4, Vide Katha No.49, situated at Allalasandra Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, measuring East to West 50-0 Feet and North to South 30-0 Feet, totally measuring 1500 Square Feet and bounded on: East by J.D.B. School Property. West by Site No.5. North by 30 Feet Road. South by Private Property.

ITEM No.2:
All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing residential vacant Site No.5, coming under BBMP, Ward No.4, vide BBMP Katha No.16/326/105/108/05, situated at Allalasandra Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, measuring East to West 30-0 Feet and North to South 50-0 Feet, totally measuring 1500 Square Feet and bounded on: East by Site No.3. West by Park. North by 30 Feet Road. South by Private Property.

Therefore, any person(s)/Bank/Firm/Authority, having any claim, any right, title, estate or interest in respect of the above referred properties or part thereof by way of sale, agreement of sale, exchange, mortgage, simple mortgage, MODT, JDA/GPA, charge, gift, will, minor interest, sthridhana, maintenance, inheritance, possession, partition, family settlement/arrangement, lease, sub-lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, lien, license, hypothecation, transfer of title or beneficial interest under any trust right of prescription or pre-emption or under any agreement or other disposition or under any decree, order of award/orders of any Court of Law or otherwise claiming, litigations if any in judiciary or quasi-judiciary, howsoever, are hereby requested to make the same known in writing together with supporting documents/ documentary evidence to the undersigned/named at our office within 15 days from the date of this notice, failing which it would be presumed that there are no claims over the said properties and thereafter objections/claims are not allowed/entertained.

PRASHANTH KUMAR P. D.
Advocate & Legal consultant. Spoorthi Law Associates.
No.A2, Ayodhya Complex, Suggappa Layout, 2nd Cross,
NES Main Road, Yelahanka, Bengaluru-560064.
E Mail-spoorthilaw2021@gmail.com,
Mobile No.9972435593 & 8867755989.
Date: 27-05-2024, Place: Bengaluru.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDER
(only through KPP Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (North), 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1.	North-2	BWSSB/ENTE/AE-1/138/2024-25 Dated: 20.05.2024	₹ 11,41,032/- / ₹ 33,700/-	10.06.2024 upto 3:00 pm	11.06.2024 after 4:00 pm
2.		BWSSB/ENTE/AE-1/140/2024-25 Dated: 20.05.2024	₹ 67,12,046/- / ₹ 1,58,410/-		
3.		BWSSB/ENTE/AE-1/142/2024-25 Dated: 20.05.2024	₹ 10,32,605/- / ₹ 30,400/-		
4.	North-1	BWSSB/ENTE/PB/AE-1/150/2024-25 Dated: 22.05.2024	₹ 7,86,473.3 / ₹ 23,210/-	11.06.2024 upto 3:00 pm	12.06.2024 after 4:00 pm

Sd/- Executive Engineer (North-2)
Sd/- Executive Engineer (North-1)

Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

5.	South -1	BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/246/2024-25 Dated: 22.05.2024	₹ 31,54,526/- / ₹ 74,500/-	10.06.2024 upto 4:00 pm	12.06.2024 after 4:00 pm
6.		BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/247/2024-25 Dated: 22.05.2024	₹ 47,55,502/- / ₹ 1,12,300/-		
7.		BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/248/2024-25 Dated: 22.05.2024	₹ 47,49,244/- / ₹ 1,12,100/-		
8.		BWSSB/EES-1/AE/TO/249/2024-25 Dated: 22.05.2024	₹ 76,39,872/- / ₹ 1,80,400/-		
9.		BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/268/2024-25 Dated: 23.05.2024	₹ 6,37,775/- / ₹ 18,900/-	03.06.2024 upto 4:00 pm	05.06.2024 after 4:00 pm

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-1)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours. DIPR/116/2024-25

This century, heatwaves are moving slower and lasting longer

Scientists analysed the upper atmosphere's air circulation patterns to see how the moving air could affect the big blobs of heat that render heatwaves; they found that over the years, the jet stream — a fast, narrow current of air that flows from west to east high up in the troposphere — has become weaker

Rohini Subrahmanyam

Growing up in the 1990s in India meant having seen an ad for a glucose-based drink on television in which the sun literally sucks the life-force out of children with a giant straw as they are playing. This ad has started to hit closer to reality. India has increasingly been in the grip of more frequent and intense heat waves, with outdoor workers especially struggling with the rising mercury.

A recent study published in *Science Advances* showed that it wasn't just India: the whole world is grappling with slower and longer heatwaves.

Temperature and circulation

Heatwaves have a terrible impact on human and animal life, with increased risk of wildfires, damaged crops, and worse health. Analysing temperatures around the world from 1979 to 2020, Wei Zhang, a climate scientist at Utah State University, and his colleagues studied how they have changed over time.

On average, they found, heatwaves have slowed down nearly 8 km/day each decade and lasted longer by about four days – the effects being particularly drastic in North America and Eurasia. Heatwaves have also increased in frequency, from about 75 events averaged over 1979-1983 to about 98 over 2016-2020. "In thinking about heatwaves and how they would change in the future, there are two pieces of the puzzle that climate scientists think about," Rachel White, an atmospheric scientist at the University of British Columbia, said. "One of them is thermodynamics: it's just about the temperature. As temperatures are getting warmer, heatwaves are going to get warmer. The second piece is the dynamics: the atmospheric circulation patterns that cause heatwaves."

There are still some open questions around how those might change in a warming world.

The heat moves

Previous studies have mostly focused on how frequent heatwaves are or how hot it gets during one. In this study, the researchers classified contiguous heatwaves as events with extremely high temperatures, covering more than a million square kilometres, and lasting for longer than three days. They then tracked the movement of these huge masses of hot air over space and time, studying how far and how fast they were moving - one of the first groups of scientists to do so.

Instead of just focusing on the frequency and the intensity of heatwaves, the study also checked how fast they were propagating and how long they lasted. By looking at how heatwaves move over time and space, Dr. White believes the study has bridged the gap between the thermodynamic and dynamic pieces of the heatwaves puzzle a little more than before.

"This study is looking at heatwaves like an object that can move and can travel and propagate, which you would miss if you were just looking at one point," she said. "If you just look at one point, you can be like, 'oh, the heatwave lasted for 5 days'. But the object itself lasted for longer, it just moved. That's what they are doing here, tracking them as they are moving, which is cool."

The guiding hand falters

But what could be causing them to move so sluggish? The scientists analysed the upper atmosphere's air circulation patterns, to see how the moving air could affect these big blobs of heat. They found that over the years, the jet stream – a fast, narrow current of air that flows from west to east high up in the troposphere – has become weaker.

The jet stream guides atmospheric waves, waves that are caused by the earth's rotation and which influence the earth's surface temperature. As the jet stream weakens, these waves also move more slowly, leading to more persistent weather events, and more spells of high and slow-moving heat.

> Given that heatwaves have such a huge impact on human health and the environment, we need to think about climate adaptation
>
> **WEI ZHANG**
> Climate scientist, Utah State University

To check if human activity had played a role in this outcome, the researchers ran simulations with temperature data from 1979 to 2020, but included scenarios with and without human greenhouse gas emissions. They found that though natural climate variability and natural events also influenced how heatwaves had changed, human activity and greenhouse gas emissions have played a dominant role in rendering the slower-moving and longer-lasting heat.

Dr. White said the next steps would be to further tease apart the role of atmospheric air circulation patterns in contributing to heatwave dynamics on the ground. Country-specific changes in heatwaves over time would also be some of the missing pieces of the puzzle she would like to see. "I think there's just a lot that can be done with this dataset, now that they have created it," she said.

Dr. Zhang does plan to delve deeper into regional differences as part of the group's next steps, while also working on climate adaptation strategies. "Given that heatwaves have such a huge impact on human health and the environment, we need to think about climate adaptation," he said.

Mitigation strategies

In densely populated urban areas, some strategies to better mitigate changes in heatwaves would be to plant more trees and increase green infrastructure - an undertaking Dr. Zhang has himself been involved in. Together with Tree Utah, an NGO, he has been engaging people in planting and taking care of trees. He has also been teaching a class on Climate Adaptation Science at Utah State University, where he helps students learn and apply climate adaptation strategies, with projects like working with farmers on alternative crops.

"This paper is another form of evidence that climate change is altering these extreme weather events," Dr. Zhang said. Adding to the already long list of studies, like how the intensity of hurricanes has increased or how there is extreme precipitation, this study, in Dr. Zhang's words, "is another signal of how climate change could influence our daily lives, our health, our environment – by changing the behaviour of heatwaves."

(Rohini Subrahmanyam is a freelance journalist)

Taking cover: Women cover their faces to protect from heat at Bikaner in Rajasthan on April 19. REUTERS

THE GIST

- Heatwaves have increased in frequency, from about 75 events averaged over 1979-1983 to about 98 over 2016-2020
- The jet stream guides atmospheric waves that are caused by the earth's rotation and which influence the earth's surface temperature
- As the jet stream weakens, these waves also move more slowly, leading to more persistent weather events, and more spells of high and slow-moving heat
- Though natural climate variability and natural events also influenced how heatwaves had changed, human activity and greenhouse gas emissions have played a dominant role in rendering the slower-moving and longer-lasting heat

BIG SHOT

Japan's new whaling mothership, the *Kangei Maru*, arrives at Ariake pier in Tokyo. The nearly 9,300-tonne ship, which is the country's first domestically built whaling ship, set sail on its maiden hunting voyage on May 21, heralding a new era for the controversial practice defended by the government as an integral part of national culture. AFP

WHAT IS IT?

Astronomical transients: burning bright in the blink of an eye

Vasudevan Mukunth

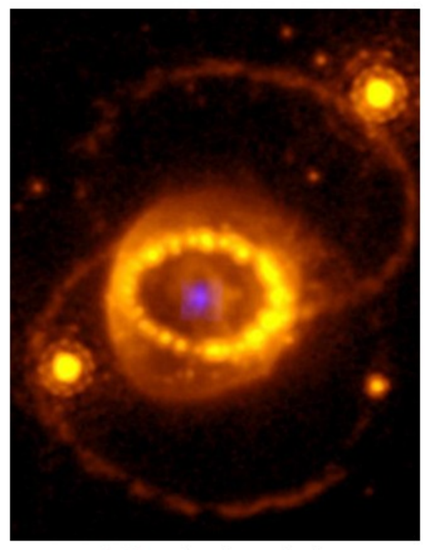
In astronomy, a 'transient' is any celestial object whose brightness changes in short spans of time. There are many kinds of astronomical transients, all of them united by phenomena that are violent in some measure. Astronomers study transients to understand where their violence comes from and what that can tell us about non-transient events.

On May 21, in fact, the Indian-American astronomer Shrinivas Kulkarni was awarded the Shaw Prize for Astronomy in 2024 for his work on the physics of astronomical transients.

One of the most well-known such transients is supernovae — when the outer layers of large stars blow up while their cores implode because the stars have run out of elements to fuse. Many a supernova has been known to become so bright that it emits light more intensely than the stars in the rest of its host galaxy combined.

Another famous transient is the active galactic nucleus (AGN). The centres of massive galaxies host supermassive black holes. Sometimes, these black holes actively feast on matter in their orbit. Interactions between the black holes and the matter in this process cause the latter to acquire energy and glow with a changing brightness.

In 2007, astronomers discovered a mysterious new transient called a fast radio burst (FRB). We have since found hundreds of FRBs even though they're hard to spot: they can emit more than 10-times as much energy as the Sun in a few milliseconds. We don't know what causes them.



Moment of shine: The aftermath of supernova 1987A. Supernovae are one of the most well-known astronomical transients. AP

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Six killed in collision near Hassan; 7-year-old girl among three killed in accidents in city

51 people were killed in road accidents across the State in 24 hours, said Alok Kumar, ADGP, Traffic and Road Safety

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA/BENGALURU

As many as six persons, including a child, died on the spot after the car by which they were travelling met with an accident near Echanahalli on NH 75 on the outskirts of Hassan early on Sunday.

Members of a family were returning to their village in Bengaluru Rural district after a visit to a hospital in Mangaluru. As the driver lost control of the vehicle, it jumped off the road divider and hit the lorry coming from the opposite side, the police said.

The impact was severe, causing extensive damage to the car. The local people and travellers on the highway informed the police. Fire and Emergency Services Department staff were called to retrieve the bodies from the mangled car.

The deceased have been identified as Narayana Swamy, 55; his wife Sunanda, 40; Sunanda's sister Nethra, 30; Nethra's husband Ravi Kumar; their son Chetan, 5; and driver Gunashekhar, 35. They had been to Mangaluru to consult a doctor as Narayana Swamy had suffered a stroke recently. Narayana Swamy and Sunanda were residents of Karahalli in Devanahalli taluk, while Ravi Kumar and Nethra were residents of Andarahalli in Hoskote taluk. They had hired a car for the travel. The driver, Gunashekhar, was a resident of Kondenahalli in Chickballapur district.

The mangled remains of the car that was involved in the accident on NH 75 near Hassan on Sunday.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The bodies were shifted to the district hospital in Hassan. The police suspected that the driver was sleepy and lost control of the vehicle while driving at high speed.

Hundreds of people from neighbouring localities and villages rushed to the spot after the accident. The movement of traffic on the busy highway was also affected for some time.

Killed on the spot

In Bengaluru, a seven-year-old girl was killed on the spot in an accident at Kaggalipura on Sunday. The deceased, Nagalaksmi, daughter of Venkatesh, was playing outside her house when a woman in the neighbourhood, who was learning to drive a car, pressed the accelerator pedal instead of applying brakes out of panic when she noticed the girl. As a result, the girl was crushed under the vehicle and died on the spot, said the police. The Kaggalipura police detained the woman and seized the vehicle.

In another incident, a couple was killed on the spot when a KSRTC bus knocked them down on the outskirts of Ramanagara on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Ravi Kumar, 45, and Lakshmamma, 40. The couple, daily wage workers, were residents of Honnapura village in Kudur police station limits.

They were returning home from Kanakapura after visiting their daughter. The Ramanagara Rural police have registered a case of death due to negligence and rash and negligent driving against the driver and arrested him.

According to Alok Kumar, Additional Director-General of Police, Traffic and Road Safety, as many as 51 people were killed in separate road accidents that occurred across the State in 24 hours.

Main reasons

According to him, rash and negligent driving, lack of skills among drivers, and fatigue are the main reasons for accidents which have been resulting in an alarming number of deaths.

KSRTC cracks down on phone use by drivers after incident on Mysuru highway

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A KSRTC driver was caught on CCTV camera using a mobile phone while driving on May 12

After a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus driver was caught using a mobile phone while driving on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway, the corporation has directed the crew not to use phones while driving.

After 60 CCTV cameras were installed on the Bengaluru-Mysuru access-controlled highway, a KSRTC driver was spotted using a mobile phone while driving near Shri Chamundeshwari Hospital in Channapatna on May 12. Police officials said the CCTV camera footage captured the driver using a mobile phone and violating lane regulations. The driver has been identified as an employee of the Hunsur depot, operating a bus from the Mysuru Rural division.

The KSRTC has launched an inquiry into the incident. Corporation officials stated that appropriate action would be taken following the investigation. Senior KSRTC officials clarified that mobile phones may only be used during emergencies and when the driver is not seated at the wheel.

"Since most of the buses are now operated by a single crew member who serves as both driver and conductor, we allow them to carry a mobile phone. This is necessary for contacting passengers with reserved seats and handling any emergencies, such as a bus breakdown, when they need to reach the depot. Therefore, we permit them to have a mobile phone," a official said. "However, if a driver misuses this privilege, the corporation will not tolerate it. We will conduct an investigation, and appropriate action will be taken. We have instructed our officials and all depots to ensure that our crew members do not use mobile phones while driving," official added.

Police search on for those who created FB account to cheat friends of ex-ADGP

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The south division cybercrime police are on the lookout for fraudsters who created a Facebook account in the name of the former Additional Director-General of Police Bhaskar Rao and cheated his friends of ₹3 lakh.

In his complaint on Thursday, Mr. Rao said the accused created an account in the name 'Nimma Bhaskar Rao' on May 16 and sent friend requests to all his friends on his actual Facebook account.

The accused then messaged them stating that he was planning to sell the sofa in his house and subsequently received money totalling ₹3 lakh through different online payment modes.

The fraud came to light when one of his friends, suspecting something fishy, called Mr. Rao to confirm, following which he approached the police and filed a complaint.

The police are now trying to track down the accused through the online money transactions.

In March 2021, the former ADGP's FB account was hacked and the accused, posing as Mr. Rao, approached his friends seeking monetary help.

Senior citizen loses ₹4.5 crore to stock market investment fraud

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 77-year-old man lost his life's savings of ₹4.5 crore to a stock market investment scam, which, according to senior police officers, is one of the most common forms of online cybercrimes continuing unabated.

The victim, a resident of Rajajinagar, filed a complaint with the north division cybercrime police on Friday, following which efforts are on to freeze the bank accounts to stop payments.

In his complaint, the victim said he got a call from an unknown number offering investment in stocks for high returns in the first week of March and was even offered training on how to make right investment for better returns.

The victim agreed and joined the WhatsApp group having many people. The group admin used to take a one-hour class every afternoon for a few days to teach the members on how to invest in stocks and block trading at the right time for better results. A few days later, the accused proposed the victim an offer of bulk stocks with up to 40% discount and shared a link to invest.

Excited by the offer, the victim followed the instructions and transferred ₹3.6 crore online and within a few days, the website was showing a total amount of ₹5.7 crore.

When the victim tried to withdraw money, the accused asked him to pay a commission of ₹72 lakh.

The fraud came to light when the victim tried to withdraw the money, but he could not. The police could not track the transaction details as it was a weekend and bank holiday.

In April, a 52-year-old businessman lost ₹5.2 crore in a similar way in the south division cybercrime police station limits.

Man arrested for killing two persons

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Banashankari police on Sunday arrested a 26-year-old habitual offender who allegedly killed two people sleeping on the footpath by crushing their head with a boulder to rob them of valuables.

Based on a murder case reported in Banashankari on May 12, the police initiated an investigation and tracked down the accused, identified as Girish. By then, he had allegedly killed one more person in a similar way in the city market area on May 18.

According to the police, the accused, who used to work as a daily wage labourer during the day, ganged up with his associates to rob valuables from people walking alone at night. The accused was allegedly involved in four criminal cases and was arrested in an assault and robbery case and jailed for 10 months before he was released in 2020. Since then, he had been involved in stealing valuables from people sleeping out in the open, the police said.

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BASKETBALL FEDERATION OF INDIA

TENDER NOTICE

NATIONAL STAR BASKETBALL LEAGUE 3X3 LEAGUE (MEN & WOMEN) AND 5X5 LEAGUE (MEN & WOMEN)

Basketball Federation of India (BFI) invites two separate Bids under two bid-basis, i.e., Technical Bid and Financial Bid for **"Engagement of Organizing Partner for the execution of National Star Basketball 3x3 League (Men & Women) and 5x5 League (Men & Women)".**

The tender details will be available on the website of BFI from 27.05.2024 at 04.00 PM. The interested bidders have to pay the Tender Fee (Non Refundable) of an amount INR 2,00,000 (INR Two Lakhs only) through NEFT/Bank transfer to BFI's bank details which is mentioned below and send a confirmation email with UTR and transaction details to nsblindia.tenders@gmail.com post which the RFP will be shared with the bidder over email within 24 hours.

Bidders should submit their bids through an email to nsblindia.tenders@gmail.com and hardcopy at O/o. Basketball Federation of India, 9th Floor, 27 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110001 by 17-06-2024 up to 12:00 pm.

In case scheduled date of submission/tender opening date is declared as a government holiday then tender will be submitted/opened on the very next working day on the earlier scheduled time. The overseer of the tendering process shall be Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. Ravindra Bhat (Former Judge of Supreme Court of India).

BFI reserves the right to cancel the bid at any time or amend/withdraw any of the terms and conditions contained in the Bid Document without assigning any reason thereof.

For further information, please contact:
BASKETBALL FEDERATION OF INDIA
Email: nsblindia.tenders@gmail.com
Website: https://www.basketballfederationindia.org/
Address: 9th Floor, 27 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110001. **Tel.:** +91 83685 47971

Bank Account Details:

SL. No.	Particulars	Details
1	Account Name	Basketball Federation of India
2	Bank Name	Union Bank of India
3	Branch Name	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Branch, New Delhi - 110003
4	Account Number	108510011002393
5	IFSC Code	UBIN0810851

Dated : Monday, 27th May 2024

JSS Mahavidyapeetha
JSS Science and Technology University
Sri Jayachamarajendra College of Engineering, Mysuru
(A Constituent College of JSS STU)

NIRF 2023 Rank Band 150 - 200 | ARIIA 2023 Rank Band 101 - 150 | India Today 28th Rank | IIRF 2023: 14th Rank at National Level, 5th Rank in the South Zone, 5th Rank at the State Level
CAREERS 360 50th Rank | CAREERS 360 37th Rank | Outlook 2023 21st Rank

Programs offered at JSS Science and Technology University.
K - CET code – E057 | COMED-K code: E061
PG MCA CET code – C480 | M.Tech CET code: T873

UG Programs:
- B.E. in Biotechnology
- B.E. in Civil Engineering
- B.E. in Construction Technology and Management
- B.E. in Computer Science and Engineering
- B.E. in Computer Science and Business System
- B.E. in Electronics and Communication Engineering
- B.E. in Information Science and Engineering
- B.E. in Mechanical Engineering
- Bachelor of Computer Applications

PG Programs:
- M.Tech. in Biotechnology
- M.Tech. in Data Science
- M.Tech. in Health Science and Water Engineering
- M.Tech. in Industrial Electronics
- M.Tech. in Infrastructure Engineering and Management
- M.Tech. in Material Science and Engineering
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- M.Tech. in Software Engineering
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Programs offered at SJCE (Constituent College of JSS STU)
K - CET code - E021 | K - CET code - E284, COMED-K code: E058 (Only for CSE)
PG MCA CET code – C522 | M.Tech CET code: T990

UG Programs:
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- Master of Computer Application

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Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, MAY. 27			
RISE	05:53	SET	18:41
RISE	22:26	SET	09:02
TUESDAY, MAY. 28			
RISE	05:53	SET	18:42
RISE	23:18	SET	10:03
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 29			
RISE	05:53	SET	18:42
RISE	00:00	SET	11:03

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	26
Mysuru	31	21
Bengaluru	31	22

Bengaluru Today
32°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be little warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant. Spell of light rain and thundershower tmay occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
33°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm and humid. Night will comfortable.

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THE HINDU
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READER'S MAIL

Delay in completing pipeline work causing hardship to many

Sir, - The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has taken up pipe laying work in Dubasipalya main road - a major link road from Mysuru Road to I.B. Layout, Upadhyaya Layout, and R.R. Layout. Since the work has been progressing at a snail's pace for over several months, the approach road from Mysuru Road to these layouts has been cut-off, forcing the public and residents of these localities to take alternative but longer routes to commute daily. The inordinate delay in completing the work has also caused a lot of inconvenience to the residents of Dubasipalya. BWSSB authorities should expedite the work and put an end to the hardship being faced by people.

N. Sadhasiva Reddy,
Bengaluru

Readers can write to letters.bangalore @thehindu.co.in

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated May 27, we take a look at whether BMTC metro feeder buses have solved the last mile connectivity gaps. For years, commuters have had to depend on their cars or two-wheelers to fill this gap. This added to the city's congestion, while exposing the lack of adequate parking spaces at most metro stations.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip since October 7

35,984 In more than seven months of war between Israel and Palestine, at least 80,643 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip. AFP

The number of motor accident claims pending nationwide

10.46 In lakh. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority said that motor accident claims worth ₹80,455 crore are pending across the country. PTI

The number of war prisoners freed by the Houthi group

113 Yemen's Houthi group freed more than 100 detainees in Sanaa on Sunday, calling the move a "unilateral humanitarian initiative" to pardon prisoners and return them to their families. REUTERS

India in trade deficit with nine of top 10 trading partners

238.3 In $ billion. India's trade deficit with China, Russia, Korea, and Hong Kong increased in the last fiscal compared to 2022-23. PTI

The UN raises Papua New Guinea landslide death toll

670 persons. A massive landslide in Port Moresby has displaced more than 1,000 people. UN estimates that more than 150 houses are now buried. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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An overview of Europe's AI convention

What is the scope of the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law? What is the difference between a framework convention and a protocol? How does the convention address national security concerns?

EXPLAINER

Krishna Ravi Srinivas

The story so far:

The global governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming more complex even as countries try to govern AI within their borders in various ways, ranging from acts of law to executive orders. Many experts have articulated a global treaty to this effect, but the obstacles in its path are daunting.

What is Europe's AI convention?

Although there are many ethical guidelines, 'soft law' tools, and governance principles enshrined in many documents, none of them are binding or are likely to result in a global treaty. There is also no ongoing negotiation for an AI treaty at the global level anywhere. Against this background, the Council of Europe (COE) took a big step by adopting the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, also known as the 'AI convention', on May 17. The COE is an intergovernmental organisation formed in 1949, with currently 46 members. The agreement is a comprehensive convention covering AI governance and links to human rights, democracy, and the responsible use of AI. The framework convention will be opened for signature on September 5.

What is a framework convention?

A 'framework convention' is a legally binding treaty that specifies the broader commitments and objectives under the convention, and sets mechanisms to achieve them. The task of setting specific targets is left to subsequent agreements. Those agreements that are negotiated under the framework convention will be called protocols. For example, the Convention on Biological Diversity is a framework convention while the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a protocol under it that deals with living modified organisms.

ISTOCKPHOTO

The framework convention approach is useful because it allows flexibility even as it encodes the core principles and processes by which the objectives are to be realised. Parties to the convention have the discretion to decide the ways in which to achieve the objectives, depending on their capacities and priorities. The AI convention can catalyse the negotiation of similar conventions at the regional level in other places. Then again, as the U.S. is also a member of the COE, the convention can indirectly affect AI governance in the U.S. as well, which matters because the country is currently a hotbed of AI innovation.

What is the scope of the convention?

Article 1 of the convention states: "The provisions of this Convention aim to ensure that activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems are fully consistent with human rights, democracy and the rule of law".

Article 3 states: "The scope of this Convention covers the activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems that have the potential to interfere with human rights, democracy, and the rule of law as follows: a. Each Party shall apply this Convention to the activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems undertaken by public authorities or private actors acting on their behalf. b. Each Party shall address risks and impacts arising from activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems by private actors... in a manner conforming with the object and purpose of this Convention."

Does it address national security?

The exemptions in Articles 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 are broad and pertain to the protection of national security interests, research, development and testing, and national defence, respectively. As a result, military applications of AI are not covered by the AI convention. While this is a matter of concern, it's a pragmatic move given the lack of consensus on regulating such applications. In fact, the exemptions in Articles 3.2 and 3.3 – while broad – don't completely rule out the convention's applicability vis-a-vis national security and testing, respectively.

Finally, the 'General Obligations' in the convention pertain to the protection of human rights (Article 4), the integrity of democratic processes, and respect for the rule of law (Article 5). While disinformation and deep fakes haven't been addressed specifically, parties to the convention are expected to take steps against them under Article 5. In fact, the convention indicates (in Article 22) that parties can go beyond the commitments and obligations specified.

Why do we need the AI convention?

The AI convention doesn't create new and/or substantive human rights specific to AI. Instead, it asserts that existing human and fundamental rights that are protected by international and national laws will need to stay protected during the application of AI systems as well. The obligations are primarily directed towards governments, which are expected to install effective remedies (Article 14) and procedural safeguards (Article 15). In all, the convention takes a comprehensive approach to mitigating risks from the use of AI systems for human rights and democracy. There are bound to be challenges to implementing it, particularly at a time when AI regulation regimes are yet to be fully established and technology continues to outpace policy.

Krishna Ravi Srinivas is Adjunct Professor of Law, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, and Associate Faculty Fellow, CeRAI, IIT Madras.

THE GIST

- The Council of Europe (COE) took a big step by adopting the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, also known as the 'AI convention', on May 17.
- A 'framework convention' is a legally binding treaty that specifies the broader commitments and objectives under the convention, and sets mechanisms to achieve them.
- The AI convention doesn't create new and/or substantive human rights specific to AI. Instead, it asserts that existing human and fundamental rights that are protected by international and national laws will need to stay protected during the application of AI systems as well.

What is the current status with respect to spice exports?

Why is Ethylene Oxide used for sterilisation of Indian spices? What is the method that the EU prefers?

M. Soundariya Preetha

The story so far:

Last month, Hong Kong and Singapore recalled certain spice mix products of the MDH and Everest Group allegedly over the presence of a higher than prescribed level of the sterilising agent Ethylene Oxide (ETO). The Indian authorities have now initiated several measures to ensure that Indian spices comply with food safety standards of the importing countries.

Where does contamination occur?

Ganeshan Varadarajan, promoter of Lifespice, says that India does not use ETO as a pesticide but only as a sterilising agent to reduce microbial load in finished (spice) goods. Most of the agro products, including spices, are heaped in *mandies* (auction yards for farmers) where they are contaminated by human, bird, reptile and insect contact. Many of the large factories receive material from the *mandies,* which is then fed on automated lines. It leaves them with high microbial levels and forces them to opt for ETO sterilisation. However, the contamination levels can be reduced early through the processes adopted for value addition. Consumers should start looking at the quality of products and not just the price, he says.

How big are Indian spice exports?

A quick export estimate data available with the Spices Board India shows that India enjoys a significant share in the global market for spices and spice products. In 2023-2024, India exported spices worth $4.4 billion (nearly 14 lakh tonnes), which is 12.3% higher than the financial year 2022-2023. Data shared by the United Planters Association of Southern India reveals that chilli, spice oils and oleoresins, curry powder and paste, cumin, mint products, cardamom and pepper are some of the largest exported spices and spice products in the financial year 2022-2023. In terms of production, garlic, ginger and chilli were the top three spices produced in FY23.

China, Bangladesh, west Asian countries and the U.S. are important markets for Indian spices.

What has been impact of the recall?

An office bearer of the Federation of Indian Spice Stakeholders pointed out that Singapore and Hong Kong had not banned the Indian products, but only recalled them. Exports have resumed to these countries and hence there may not be much impact in the coming months because of this issue. India's share in total spice production globally is about 70%.

Countries have different standards for ETO and maximum (pesticide) residue levels (MRL). The European Union has stringent norms for both ETO and MRLs while Japan largely sources only organic products. The industry has been talking to the Indian government demanding discussions with the EU to relax the norms in order to boost Indian spice exports to the EU market.

A section of chilli growers in Telangana said the issue is not likely to affect farmers much as most of them do not export directly. Further, Indian food exports have faced several challenges in the past too because of stringent norms of the buying countries. A planter pointed out that cardamom and black pepper are cultivated as inter crops with tea, coffee or rubber. The MRL is stringent for these main crops and hence the two spices are able to meet the norms. Manufacturers of spice mixes and pastes should look at sourcing genuine Indian grown spices rather than using imported spices. Further, they should be cautious when they import spices from other countries and export value added products, said a cardamom grower in Kerala. A turmeric exporter based out of Erode in Tamil Nadu says that while ETO is permitted by the U.S., the EU seeks steaming as the method for sterilisation. But while the cost of using ETO as a sterilising agent is ₹5 per kg, for steaming it is ₹20-₹25 a kg. "The Indian government should lay down achievable guidelines and tell the buying countries about it," he says.

What has the Spices Board done?

Following the recall by Hong Kong and Singapore, the Spices Board issued a detailed protocol to all manufacturing exporters to prevent ETO contamination. The Board also said it was starting mandatory testing of spice consignments to Singapore and Hong Kong for ETO. It has also taken up with the international food standards body the need for ETO usage limit as it varies for each country.

THE GIST

- Last month, Hong Kong and Singapore recalled certain spice mix products of the MDH and Everest Group allegedly over the presence of a higher than prescribed level of the sterilising agent Ethylene Oxide (ETO).
- A quick export estimate data available with the Spices Board India shows that India enjoys a significant share in the global market for spices and spice products.
- Following the recall by Hong Kong and Singapore, the Spices Board issued a detailed protocol to all manufacturing exporters to prevent ETO contamination.

EDUCATIONPLUS

No 'ma'am,' please

In India, we tend to put our teachers on a pedestal but how many truly respect them? And, in the context of education, how does the concept of respect fit in with a participatory approach?

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Aruna Sankaranarayanan

When I was a doctoral student in the U.S., I had a friend, who was also from India. Though I struggled initially, I started calling my professors by their first names, just like the other students in my department. My Indian friend persisted in calling her professors 'sir' or 'ma'am.'

But she often spoke disparagingly of them, saying "X sir is an idiot" or "Y ma'am doesn't know a thing." When I asked why she didn't refer to them by their names, she said it was disrespectful!

I often recall this incident, as I teach a continuing education course, where the participants are mainly in-service teachers, keen to upskill themselves. One of my requests to them is to call me by my first name without affixing a title. While many do so, a few are diffident, and a small subset reluctant to do so, despite repeated requests. But I don't blame them.

In India, we have a strong cultural trope that puts teachers on a pedestal and reveres or even deifies them. But, as the anecdote above illustrates, does our construct of 'respect' embrace only superficial facets, or does it extend to actually holding a person in deep regard? In the context of education, what are the consequences of holding someone in high esteem for a participatory approach?

Implications

The reason I persist in coaxing all participants to call me by my first name isn't purely rhetorical. This simple act also has pedagogical implications regarding the participants' relationship to knowledge, how they perceive their own learning, and how they view me.

As they are all adult learners, I prefer to think of myself as a facilitator with some degree of knowledge and expertise in the areas we are discussing. But that does not make me an authority or the ultimate arbiter of truth. Additionally, expertise is usually accompanied by blind spots, and, every once in a while, we need to re-examine models and theories within a field through fresh eyes.

Further, calling me ma'am creates a psychological distance between me, the facilitator, and participants. Rather than being a 'sage on the stage', I view my role as being aligned with that of my participants.

We are all lifelong learners, seeking to enhance our knowledge and collective wisdom. Just as I have experiences and knowledge to draw on, the participants have deep wells of insights, anecdotes, and examples to share that can either buttress or challenge some of the claims made in the discussions.

For us to have truly meaningful exchanges, participants need to feel empowered to question, challenge, or critique arguments put forth in class, either by me or by other participants. They also need to question the readings. Just as we assume that the teacher has the last word, textbooks too are often perceived as the fount of truth.

To be effective learners, participants have to take ownership of their learning and not view the facilitator as someone directing – or worse dictating – their learning journey.

My role, perhaps, is to nudge each one to question many of the assumptions and preconceptions they might bring, and to help them define their own learning trajectories as they progress in directions that are meaningful and relevant to their unique contexts. But, I too am journeying with them, refining my own views, unpacking my presuppositions, and deepening my understanding.

Do my participants respect me? Sure, they do, just as I respect each of them, their perspectives and questions. When respect is earned, it is usually bi-directional. It is hard to hold someone in high esteem if that person doesn't respect you as an individual.

Every student and teacher, regardless of age or level of education, deserves to be respected. What is the point of education if it doesn't emphasise our common humanity?

Finally, when participants express dissenting viewpoints or ask tough questions, everyone stands to gain. Often, the enriching exchanges we have in class leave me energised and enthused. I only hope that the participants look forward to the next session as eagerly as I do. My only request: No 'ma'am', please.

The writer is visiting faculty, Azim Premji University.

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

Stay disciplined

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

I am preparing to take the UPSC exams this year. I have a B.A. Public Administration (Hons) from IGNOU. I'm also a writer with two anthologies to my name. I am not sure about my Plan B. What are the possible career options or further courses that I can do? Will joining an NGO help with the UPSC CSE?
Siera

Dear Siera,

What about further studies in Public Policy, Governance or Public Affairs, given your background in Public Administration? You will find roles in government, non-profit organisations and consulting firms after this. You can also explore media and journalism or content writing and copywriting. Does research and academia interest you? Joining an NGO or working in the development sector can be satisfying and provide valuable experience and insight into social issues, public service and community development. Try volunteering at an NGO that focuses on areas like education, child care, healthcare, human rights, social welfare, and environmental conservation as this will complement your UPSC preparation, offer insights into socio-economic issues, governance challenges, and grassroots realities, and enhance your understanding of public service delivery, policy implementation, and community engagement. It will also demonstrate your commitment to public service and will strengthen your profile as a UPSC aspirant.

I'm in the first year of B.Tech. CSE. I want to take the UPSC exams. But I'm getting addicted to my mobile. How can I overcome this?
Greeshmitha

Dear Greeshmitha,

Remember that overcoming this addiction requires self-discipline, patience and persistence. Stay committed and focus on your academic goal. Create a healthy study environment and commit to yourself that you will stay away from the phone during study hours. Make sure it is not near you, may be in another room or put it on Aeroplane Mode or switch it off. Set reasonable boundaries on usage: such as using it when you take a break or after you complete your portion. Limit access and delete any apps that distract you and mute notifications. Use apps like Pomodoro timer that will help you navigate your studies and free time.

Also, identify triggers and situations when you use the phone excessively: boredom, stress, feeling low, procrastination... Once you know, work on developing healthy coping mechanisms. Engage in some form of exercise to recharge the mind and the body and/or social engagements that will help put the gadgets away. Meditation, yoga, and mindfulness practice will cultivate awareness of your thoughts, feelings and emotions. If nothing works, please meet a therapist to get help. Tech and gadget addiction is like any other addiction (the gadget being the substance). You will get support at the OPD of Rehabilitation centres, if not admitted for a detox plan.

After Class 12 (Science Stream), I earned a diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering. I am interested in spacecraft design and realised that Mechanical Engineering would have been a better option. Considering my family's finances, should I opt for another diploma in Mechanical Engineering or do a B.Tech. in a relevant field? My aim is to independently decide, plan and execute spacecraft-related works.
Adhithyan

Dear Adhithyan,

Make the decision to pursue another diploma in Mechanical Engineering or a B.Tech. in a relevant field after a detailed assessment of your career goals, personal circumstances and financial considerations. Can you seek guidance from your academic advisors and mentors who may be able to help you make an informed decision? A diploma provides hands-on technical skills and practical training in a shorter duration but a B.Tech. offers a more comprehensive curriculum, theoretical knowledge, and research opportunities. Evaluate how each educational option aligns with your career aspirations. Mechanical Engineering provides a strong foundation in mechanics, materials science, thermodynamics, and fluid dynamics, deeply relevant to spacecraft design. Mechanical Engineering with a specialisation in Aerospace, will probably better suit your career goals. Consider the financial implications of both courses. Research career prospects, employment opportunities, salary potential, industry demand and potential for career growth in the aerospace or spacecraft design industry. Finally, it is all about your personal preferences, strengths and academic interest.

I have completed my B.Tech. Information Technology and want to enter the banking industry. How can I go about this?
Dinesh

Dear Dinesh,

Have you considered an MBA in Finance? Enhance your financial fundamentals first to prepare for interviews and relevant job roles in the banking industry. You can also consider online certifications in banking operations, financial management, risk management, and regulatory compliance. You need knowledge and understanding of the banking industry, its structure, functions, products, services, regulations, and current trends. Network with bankers and industry professionals via networking events, industry conferences, professional associations, and online forums. Seek information to understand their career paths and explore roles that align with your skills, interests, and career goals. Highlight transferable skills from your IT background such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, attention to detail, project management, and communication skills, which are required in entry-level positions like technology analyst, business analyst, or data analyst. Look for opportunities to gain practical experience via internships. Stay updated with developments and trends in the industry and demonstrate your knowledge during interviews.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

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Sd/-,
Director

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In troubled waters: OpenAI CEO Sam Altman speaks during the Microsoft Build conference at Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Washington, on May 21. AFP

How the cracks in OpenAI's foundation reignited mistrust in Sam Altman

A string of researchers working on AI policy and governance in the tech company have quit in succession. For a company that started as a non-profit, OpenAI's lack of transparency has emerged as a more serious issue than its lackadaisical approach to the future of AI safety

Poulomi Chatterjee

In November last year, over the two-day snafu when OpenAI chief Sam Altman was fired and reinstated, his perception was dramatically different. Mr. Altman, who had led the company into spearheading an artificial intelligence changeover with the release of ChatGPT couldn't seem more adored. OpenAI employees had collectively flooded X with tweets saying, "I love OpenAI" in what was seen as an uprising against the decision of the OpenAI board. However, in the week gone by, much of the goodwill towards Mr. Altman seems to have changed. And the board's statement that called Mr. Altman "not consistently candid", while announcing his firing, has returned in a boomerang effect.

Concerns over AI safety

OpenAI's rough week started with the departure of Ilya Sutskever, the co-founder and former chief scientist at the company. Mr. Sutskever, who was a key member of the team that had built ChatGPT had surprisingly backed the three board members who had voted to fire Altman. The speculation was that Mr. Altman's views on AI safety was very different from the board's which was worrying given the momentum of AI development. Since Mr. Altman's reinstatement, Mr. Sutskever has practically vanished into oblivion.

AI safety seemingly was of importance to Mr. Sutskever who formed the 'superalignment team' in the company last year in July. Mr. Sutskever co-led the team, with Jan Leike, with the goal of shepherding superintelligence so it stayed on track with its reins firmly in human hands by 2027. Aside from alignment, the team would also be "improving the safety of current models like ChatGPT, as well as understanding and mitigating other risks from AI such as misuse, economic disruption, disinformation, bias and discrimination, addiction and overreliance, and others," the statement for the announcement read.

And for an ambition this lofty, the company said it would commit "20% of the compute we've secured to date over the next four years" for the initiative.

Last week, Mr. Sutskever waved goodbye to the company he founded. Two days later, Mr. Leike, a longtime researcher at OpenAI, announced his resignation as well saying he had reached a dead end after continuous disagreements with "OpenAI leadership about the company's core priorities." Signalling that the promised share of compute wasn't granted to the team, Mr. Leike expressed concern that in the recent past "safety culture and processes have taken a backseat to shiny products." Shortly after, the team which still had more than 25 people was disbanded.

A *Fortune* report shared that there was no specification around when and how the 20% compute would be distributed – was it equally over the four-year period or 20% every year or an arbitrary amount each year that would total to 20%? Regardless, it was enough reason for Mr. Sutskever and Mr. Leike to quit.

String of resignations

Even as rumblings of discord had just started, a few more researchers working on AI policy and governance quit soon after. Cullen O'Keefe quit his role as research lead on policy in April. Daniel Kokotajlo who had been working on the risks around AI models quit and responded on a forum saying he "quit OpenAI due to losing confidence that it would behave responsibly around the time of AGI."

Gretchen Kruege, another policy researcher, shared that she had resigned from the company on May 14. "One of the ways tech companies in general can disempower those seeking to hold them accountable is to sow division among those raising concerns or challenging their power. I care deeply about preventing this," her post read on X.

Severe non-disparagement policies

For a company that started as a non-profit, OpenAI's lack of transparency has emerged as a more serious issue than its lackadaisical approach to future AI safety.

On May 17, *Vox* reported that former employees had been under duress to sign lengthy exit documents that restricted them from ever speaking negatively about the company if they wanted to retain their vested equity in the company. Leaked emails showed that employees asking for more time to review the documents or seek legal counsel weren't given any leeway. "The General Release and Separation Agreement requires your signature within 7 days," a reply said for someone who had requested another week. Mr. Altman professed on X that he had been ignorant to this clause and apologised for it. The backlash to the severe tactics forced the company to backtrack and take the non-disparagement clause down.

But this might not be the end of the saga.

Jacob Hilton, a researcher at the Alignment Research Center, who quit OpenAI a year ago tweeted on X saying tech companies are responsible for protecting researchers who speak about the tech in public interest because of how powerful it is. Mr. Hilton, who had also signed the NDA lest he lose equity said while he had received a call from OpenAI management about the change in policy, he would feel more secure if they legally enforced "non-retaliation" against ex-employees by "preventing them from selling their equity, rendering it effectively worthless for an unknown period of time."

"I invite OpenAI to reach out directly to former employees to clarify that they will always be provided equal access to liquidity, in a legally enforceable way. Until they do this, the public should not expect candour from former employees," he tweeted.

ScarJo vs OpenAI

Hollywood actor Scarlett Johansson's accusations against Mr. Altman deepened public mistrust further. Post OpenAI's latest demo of ChatGPT last week, murmurs started that the voice of the AI assistant Sky was eerily close to Ms. Johansson's voice in the sci-fi film *Her*. Ms. Johansson released a statement saying Mr. Altman had reached out to her twice requesting to use her voice for Sky to which she had refused. Even more damning was Mr. Altman's own tweet on X when the demo released, simply saying "her."

While Mr. Altman provided proof later that the actress who did voice Sky wasn't directed to imitate Johansson, collective evidence shows that the cracks in OpenAI's foundation run deep and that Mr. Altman and his company are not in fact "consistently candid."

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

May 27 marks the 60th death anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru. A quiz on the life and times of one of India's foremost political leaders

V. V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
It is known that Nehru passed away in New Delhi. But in which city was he born and on what date (which is now celebrated as Children's Day)?

QUESTION 2
Who were the parents of Jawaharlal Nehru and how many siblings did he have?

QUESTION 3
With which country was the 'Panchsheel' or 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence' formally enunciated under Nehru's leadership in April 1954?

QUESTION 4
Who was the interim Prime Minister of India for a 13-day tenure following Jawaharlal Nehru's demise?

QUESTION 5
In which prison did Nehru begin to write his autobiography between June 1934 and February 1935?

QUESTION 6
Which President's son wrote the definitive, three-volume 'Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography'?

Visual question:
Name the 'samadhi' of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru where the former President of India Pranab Mukherjee is paying his tributes. FILE PHOTO

Questions and Answers to the May 24 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The Ancient Roman word for dark (or saturated) black became the source for the name of this country. **Ans: Nigeria**
2. The English word derived from 'ater' used to describe acts of cruelty. **Ans: Atrocity**
3. X is the name of a dark ink that likely originated in China around the third millennium BC. **Ans: India ink**
4. Name the 16th century reform movement in Europe in which, among other acts, the reformists decried the wearing of bright colours. **Ans: Protestant Reformation**
5. When a jaguar has a dominant allele containing the melanocortin 1 receptor gene with some deletions, it is called this name. **Ans: Black panther**
Visual: Until 2019, this was the blackest substance known to humankind. **Ans: Vantablack**
Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan| Jagrati Shukla| Saheni George

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

He is not a very discreet individual

He is quite a lexiphanic speaker. Nobody understands his long-winded lectures

S. Upendran

What is the difference in meaning between 'discreet' and 'discrete'? (K.V. Suresh, Vijayawada)
The two words are homophones – in other words, they are pronounced the same way – but they have very different meanings. The first syllable rhymes with 'miss', 'kiss' and 'hiss', and the second with 'meet', 'heat' and 'seat'. The words are pronounced 'dis-KREET' with the stress on the second syllable. Both come from the Latin 'discretus', a word which had two different meanings – 'distinct' and 'separate'. Nowadays, the word 'discreet' is mostly used to mean 'cautious'; a discreet person is someone who is very careful or very tactful about what he says and does. He chooses to remain silent rather than shoot his mouth off about something. He tries not to draw attention to himself or become a source of embarrassment to others.

My boss discreetly suggested that I should resign before charges were filed.

'Discrete' is mostly used nowadays to mean 'separate' or 'distinct'; something that has an identity of its own.

My favourite author's novels can be divided into discrete categories.

How is the word 'lexiphanic' pronounced? (Satish Kumar, Chennai)
This word of Greek origin consists of four syllables. The first rhymes with 'vex', 'rex' and 'checks', and the following vowel sounds like the 'a' in 'china'. The 'phan' in the third is pronounced like the word 'fan'. The word is pronounced 'lek-si-FAN-ic' with the stress on the third syllable. In Greek 'lexis' means 'words' or 'speech' and 'phainein' means 'show'; and according to scholars, this word was coined by the playwright Lucian of Samosata, in the first century. 'Lexiphanes' is not only the name of the main character, but also the title of the satire written by Lucian. In it, the hero makes attempts to flaunt his non-existent knowledge by using big words and lengthy sentences in his daily conversation. Today, 'lexiphanic' is used to refer to those individuals who wish to impress others by using big or bombastic words while speaking or writing.

I was never able to read his novels – he was, in my opinion, a lexiphanic writer.

What is the meaning of 'change the channel'? (C. Banumathi, Trichy)
This is an informal expression which can be used in contexts other than when we are watching television. When you are talking about something, and the listener asks you to 'change the channel', what he is requesting you to do is to talk about something else. In other words, he wishes you to change the topic of conversation.

You've talked about politics long enough. Please change the channel.

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Countermand:
a contrary command cancelling or reversing a previous command; cancel officially

Synonyms: lift, overturn, vacate, reverse, revoke, annul, repeal, rescind

Usage: *Orders to blow up the bridge were countermanded.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/countermandpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˌkaʊntəˈmɑːnd/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Police to install 890 more AI-based cameras in city

They will be put up under the Safe City project; as many as 2,500 of the existing 7,500 cameras will be revived and linked to the command centre by the end of June, say officials

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

For better security cover, the police have proposed installation of another set of 890 AI-based closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at over 500 places across the city.

Though this set of new cameras will add to the existing 7,500 cameras installed across 3,000 places around the city, 2,500 out of the existing ones are defunct due to low standards of maintenance, according to officials.

The administration department of the city police will ask BEL, instead of the current vendor BSNL, to review their functioning. The 2,500 cameras will be revived and linked to the command centre by the end of June, said officials.

A file photo of a traffic surveillance camera installed in Bengaluru.

According to the officials, the upcoming 890 advanced technology cameras will be installed at strategic locations, under the Safe City project, to help in traffic management, monitor any untoward incident such as road rage, hit and run, harassment of women, and other law and order issues round the clock. The cameras linked to the command centre can also be used for both law and order and traffic management, the officials added.

In addition, the police have proposed purchasing eight drone cameras and setting up 150 watch towers across Bengaluru. Apart from this, the department has proposed to install eight high-definition face-recognition cameras having advanced features, which will be installed in public places such as bus stands, railway stations, airports and even the cricket stadium, to help track the movement of troublemakers, suspicious characters, and habitual offenders, and take necessary action immediately.

"The funds allocated under the Safe City project will be used to install the AI-based cameras to further strengthen the command centre. The project is likely to be completed by October this year," Santosh Babu, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Administration, said.

KIA bags Green Airports Recognition-2024 award

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A file photo of Terminal-2 of the Kempegowda International Airport.

The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has bagged the silver award in the Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific & Middle East Green Airports Recognition (GAR) 2024.

The KIA bagged the silver award in the category of airports handling between 15 million and 35 million passengers a year.

ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East has announced the results of GAR 2024, recognising 12 airports in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East for their outstanding accomplishments in sustainability projects.

The theme for the Green Airports Recognition 2024 is 'Biodiversity and nature-based solutions'.

According to ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East, airports were encouraged to submit their best practices in preserving biodiversity and utilising nature-based solutions on their premises, ranging from plantation for carbon reduction and social benefits, marine life conservation by airports, wetland/ecological rejuvenation, in-house airport horticulture and nursery, and wildlife management for safe operations through nature-based solutions.

The recognised airports have been awarded in three categories - platinum, gold, and silver - based on various airport size categories and set criteria. The airports are bracketed into four categories: over 35 million passengers a year, between 15 million and 35 million passengers, between 8 million and 15 million passengers, and less than 8 million passengers a year.

Among the airports handling between 15 million and 35 million passengers a year, the platinum and gold awards were given to Japan's Kansai airport and Saudi Arabia's King Khalid International Airport, respectively. The other Indian airports to win the GAR 2024 are New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (silver) in airports handling over 35 million passengers a year category and Lucknow's Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport (silver) in airports handling less than 8 million passengers a year category.

Woman killed in tiger attack in Bandipur

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

A 48-year-old woman was killed in a tiger attack in N. Begur range of Bandipur tiger reserve following which the authorities have installed camera traps to monitor the movement of the animal.

The incident took place on Saturday but the body of the victim, identified as Chikki of Malada Haadi, was found on Sunday.

The authorities said locals saw a woman tending to her cattle being attacked by a tiger on Saturday around 6 p.m. on the edge of the tiger reserve coming under Hediyala sub-division. They raised a hue and cry following which the tiger dragged the woman inside the forest.

On receiving information, senior Forest Department officials reached the spot and launched a search operation on Sunday. The operation commenced at 6 a.m. and within 500 metres from the village boundary, the body of Chikki was found amidst shrubs and vegetation.

S. Prabhakaran, Director, Bandipur Tiger Reserve, called on the children of the deceased and expressed his condolence and handed over a cheque for ₹3 lakh as compensation.

The local villagers have been advised against venturing out in the evening and at dawn. The Forest Department has also installed 40 camera traps around the area of the incident to monitor the movement of the tiger.

25 people arrested for attack on Channagiri police station and stone pelting

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

The Davangere district police on Sunday arrested 25 people, in connection with the violence during a protest against the 'lock-up death' of a person detained by the police in Channagiri on Friday night. Davangere Superintendent of Police Uma Prashanth had set up five teams to nab those involved in vandalising the police station, stone pelting, and damaging police vehicles, and also injuring police personnel.

Police sources have said that based on CCTV camera footage and mobile phone videos of the vandalism, they identified the miscreants and arrested them.

The Channagiri station police had registered six cases in connection with the Friday night's violence. Of the six, the police have made 25 arrests in four cases. The arrested were produced before the court.

Adil was brought to the police station in Channagiri on Friday in connection with a gambling case. As he collapsed after a while, he was shifted to hospital, where he was declared dead.

Alleging that it was a case of a 'lock up death', a mob had staged the protest before the Channagiri police station which, however, turned violent resulting in injuries to 11 police personnel.

The incident already led to the Opposition blaming the State government for a failure of law and order, even as the Chief Minister admitted lapses by the police, leading to the suspension of two officers.

As a precautionary measure, additional police forces have been deployed in Channagiri. The SP has said in a release that the police were keeping an eye on social media posts.

'Probe ordered'

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters in Bengaluru on Sunday, Home Minister G. Parameshwara said a probe has been ordered into the alleged custodial death case in Channagiri.

An inspector and a Dy. SP have been suspended, as there was no proper action on part of the police and there was negligence. Action would be taken based on the inquiry, he added.

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Yet to get official response on cancellation of Prajwal's passport: Parameshwara

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Sunday said the State had not received any official response from the Centre on its request seeking cancellation of the diplomatic passport of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing multiple allegations of sexual abuse and who fled the country on April 27.

Replying to a reporter's question on External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's remark that the State government's request to cancel the diplomatic passport of Mr. Prajwal Revanna was received on May 22, Dr. Parameshwara hit out at the Centre, asking what had happened to the letter of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 1. The Chief Minister wrote a second letter to Mr. Modi on May 22 appealing once again for cancellation of Mr. Prajwal Revanna's passport, he pointed out.

Speaking to presspersons here, Dr. Parameshwara said: "as far as I know, we have not got any information so far from the Centre. I have seen that the External Affairs Minister has told the media that they are taking action and in a couple of days they will cancel diplomatic passport, but we have not got any written communication". The government has set up the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the charges against Mr. Prajwal Revanna.

"Where is the response for the Chief Minister's first letter? When a Chief Minister writes a letter to the Prime Minister's Office, it has to get its due respect. That did not happen. The External Affairs Minister is saying that they got the letter from the State on May 22, so we have to ask where did the first letter go?" the Home Minister said.

> Where is the response for the Chief Minister's first letter? When a Chief Minister writes a letter to the Prime Minister's Office, it has to get its due respect.
>
> **G. PARAMESHWARA,** Home Minister

'Remark not right'

Referring to the action proposed by the Centre, Dr. Parameshwara said: "it is good that they are taking action. But Dr. Jaishankar's remark that we have sent a letter only now and not earlier, is not right". Mr. Siddarmaiah wrote a second letter on May 22 to the Prime Minister urging him to take "prompt and necessary" action to cancel the diplomatic passport of the Hassan MP.

The Chief Minister said Mr. Prajwal Revanna, JD (S) candidate from the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency, fled on April 27 to Germany using his diplomatic passport shortly after news of his heinous action emerged and just a few hours before the FIR was filed against him. "He has abused his diplomatic privileges to flee the country and to escape criminal proceedings," Mr. Siddaramaiah had said in the letter.

On the State government's commitment to protect the interests of victims of Hassan sexual abuse cases and providing security to them, the Home Minister said the Superintendent of Police there and range Inspector-General of Police have been instructed to ensure that victims did not face any problems.

'Hassan chalo'

To a question on some organisations and activists organising 'Hassan chalo' on May 30, demanding arrest of Mr. Prajwal Revanna and protection for women, he said: "they might be doing it for public awareness, let them do it."

On former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy's demand that punishment should be given for the real culprits behind the pen drive leak and circulation case, Dr. Parameshwara said: "we are doing it and for that purpose only SIT has been formed".

"From the probe it will be known as to who is involved, who distributed the pen drives. Investigation is on. Making statements at this stage may hamper the probe," the Home Minister said.

Pre-monsoon showers set off agricultural activities

Buoyant farmers are flocking to cattle markets, leading to rise in prices of the livestock

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI/MYSURU

The State is hoping for bountiful monsoon this year after last year's unprecedented drought that accentuated farmers' distress owing to crop loss.

The India Meteorological Department has already forecast normal rains and the monsoon is expected to keep its date and arrive in Karnataka in the first week of June.

The pre-monsoon showers across the State are encouraging, with the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre records indicating that such rain in most of the districts was above normal.

A farmer preparing the field for sowing at Marewada village in Dharwad taluk. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Temperature dips

This has not only triggered agricultural activity but also resulted in the temperature dipping considerably in Kalyana Karnataka and Kittur Karnataka regions.

While downpour with gusty winds have also caused damage to public and private property along with reports of loss of lives in a few areas, the showers have raised hopes of the farming community.

Anticipating good rains, agricultural and horticultural officers are ensuring good stock of quality seeds and fertilizers in their respective districts.

Farmers too are buoyed by the prospects of good rains and are flocking to cattle markets, leading to a rise in prices of the livestock.

At the Holebasaveshwar Cattle Market in Haunsbhavi of Haveri district, a pair of average oxen was being sold in the range of ₹60,000 to ₹90,000, while oxen of good breeds fetched ₹1.2 lakh to ₹1.4 lakh ahead of the kharif season. With Shivamogga region receiving good rains, farmers from the district have been visiting cattle markets in neighbouring districts.

Good rain in Yadgir

In Yadgir district where more than average rainfall has been received, farmers are busy preparing land for sowing for the kharif season and a sowing target of 4.02 lakh hectares has been set for the district.

In drought-prone Raichur district, already more than the average rainfall has been registered during May, with the Agriculture Department setting a target of 5.56 lakh hectares for the kharif season. Dharwad district too benefited from the recent rains: it received 63 mm rainfall as against the average rainfall of 40 mm during May.

A sowing target of 2.7 lakh hectares has been fixed for the district and seed distribution of prominent crops such as soybean, maize, groundnut, green gram, and paddy has begun through 31 seed distribution centres. The district has a stock of 33,240 tonnes of fertilizers to meet the demand.

Meanwhile in Haveri district, 2,872 quintals of seeds and 6,453 tonnes of fertilizers have already been distributed among farmers.

Crop damage

In parts of southern Karnataka such as Mysuru and Chamarajanagar, heavy rains and gales caused widespread damage to crops in Periyapatna in Mysuru district while 980 hectares of crops, mainly banana plantation, was affected in Chamarajanagar district.

The target for sowing for Mysuru has been pegged at 3,90,267 hectares, of which paddy cultivation is expected to be taken up on 89,200 hectares; ragi will be cultivated on 77,500 hectares and other crops include tobacco, maize, corn, cotton, groundnut, sunflower are the other major crops for the coming kharif season.

But heavy rains in some parts of Mysuru and Mandya since the last few days has saturated the soil and farmers say that they have to wait for a few days for the land to dry before resuming agricultural work.

The Agriculture Department has pegged the demand for seeds at 30,689 quintals and has said that there is enough stock to meet the requirements.

Above normal pre-monsoon rain in all districts

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The perceptible fall in temperature across the State – which was reeling under unprecedented heatwave till the first week of May – is owing to pre-monsoon showers that were both uniform and widespread.

According to Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC), 26 districts received rainfall which is 60% more than the normal and categorised as "Large Excess", while five districts received rainfall which is 20% to 59% above normal and classified as ''Excess'' category. This is for the period from May 1 to 26.

There is no district that comes under normal or deficient category. Districts of southern Karnataka such as Kodagu, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, and Chikkamagaluru have received more copious rainfall compared to regions in northern Karnataka.

Mysuru received 240.9 mm of rain between May 1 and 26, which is 144% above normal while Hassan received 240.3 mm of rain and it is 202% above normal.

Districts with heavy rain during the period include Chamarajanagar (193.2 mm), Mandya (197.5 m m), Bengaluru Urban (148.5 mm), Bengaluru Rural (146.5 mm), Tumakuru (180.1 mm), and Kodagu (270.2 mm) among others.

The coastal belt too has received rain that is above normal as also north and central Karnataka regions, shoring up hopes of normal monsoon from June.

Home Minister hits out at Vijayendra

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Sunday lashed out at State BJP president B.Y. Vijayendra for his charge that the Congress government failed to handle law and order situation by asking him to look at the situation in a BJP-ruled State like Gujarat where many people were killed in a fire accident at a gaming zone.

Dr. Parameshwara asserted that the Congress government would not allow the law and order situation to deteriorate at any cost.

Referring to the fire at a gaming zone in Rajkot that killed 33 people, the Home Minister said: "who is responsible for it? Who has to resign? The Chief Minister and Home Minister of Gujarat have to resign. It is easy to say, but one has to also justify.

The State BJP chief had alleged that law and order had collapsed in the State following the murder of two girls in Hubballi, a custodial death at Channagiri, and the gang war in Udupi.

Commenting on a recent incident involving BJP MLA Harish Poonja, Dr. Parameshwara said: "legislators go to the police station and engage in verbal spats. When such is the situation, how will there be peace in society? That is the reason we keep on saying no one should take law into their own hands. If anyone does that, whoever it is we will take action against them and no one will be spared."

Rajesh relieved of his post as BJP State organising general secretary

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a surprise move, BJP State organising general secretary G.V. Rajesh has been abruptly relieved of the responsibility. Though he had one more year left in his three-year term, he has been shifted elsewhere.

It is a tradition in the BJP to draft a person from the RSS to manage its organisation as organising general secretary. Now Mr. Rajesh has been moved to the RSS wing *Samarasya*.

While no official reason has been cited for the move or a formal announcement made, speculations are rife in party circles that he may have been removed for not being able to maintain "individuality" amidst the presence of stalwarts in the party organisation that is allegedly gripped by groupism. The party State leaders also seek to link the shifting of the low-profile Mr. Rajesh to the alleged failure to prevent some of the party hardliners from turning rebels in the last one year. Also, there were murmurs that the party organisation was becoming stagnant in the last couple of years and the connect between the party and its cadre was becoming thin.

The State BJP head office in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

In fact, the mass outreach programmes of the party, which is its main strength, was not the best in the recently held Lok Sabha polls. So much so that even in Bengaluru there were several areas where the BJP workers did not even make a single visit to seek votes.

Though Mr. Rajesh alone cannot be held responsible for all these party problems, which have a larger perspective, it is being said that the party central leadership has sent a strong message to party stalwarts that it is watching the developments in Karnataka.

A section of party leaders also believe that Mr. Rajesh may have sought to relieve himself of the organisational responsibility. However, several senior leaders believe that his shifting is the first of a slew of measures to be implemented by the party high command after the Lok Sabha results are announced.

Such a speculation has caused concern among leaders holding prominent positions in the organisation as they too do not know if they will also face the axe. However, the general belief in the party State unit is that there could be a round of corrective measures enforced by the party high command depending upon the Lok Sabha results in the State.

'Congress has vitiated Council poll scenario by trying to lure voters'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Janata Dal (S) State president H.D. Kumaraswamy on Sunday accused the Congress of trying to win the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Council by distributing money and gifts "just like what it did in the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls".

Participating at a coordination meeting of the BJP and JD(S) with respect to facing the elections to the Bengaluru Graduates' constituency, at the JD(S) office here, Mr. Kumaraswamy accused the Congress of trying to vitiate the poll scenario by resorting to lure voters. Such coordination meetings were held in various constituencies on Sunday.

Describing the alliance between the BJP and JD(S) as historic, he said such a pact had been reached under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda.

The former Chief Minister accused the Congress government of stalling the development of Bengaluru city by focusing only on its guarantee schemes.

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashok alleged that such was the level of deterioration of law and order situation in the State that there was no guarantee that women and girl children would return home after setting out for work and schools respectively. Alleging interference in matters related to Home Department, he said there was confusion on who was the actual Home Minister of the State.

Former Deputy Chief Minister C.N. Ashwath Narayan said both the BJP and JD (S) had joined hands to free Karnataka from the Congress. The dream of building a Karnataka of abundance could be achieved only though this alliance, he said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

When Siddaramaiah fell in love

When Chief Minister Siddaramaiah *(pictured)* attended a function in Mysuru on Thursday to inaugurate a website for registration of inter-caste couples in the State, few would have expected him to share one of his best-kept secrets.

Like most young men, Mr. Siddaramaiah too was smitten by a girl he had befriended during his student days and nursed hopes of marrying her. However, caste played spoilsport and ruined his plans.

As Mr. Siddaramaiah opened up on one of his deeply personal anecdotes from life recalling his friendship with a girl from outside his caste, the curious audience at the function was all ears. Mr. Siddaramaiah, however, asked the audience not to get him wrong amid the cheers of excitement from them. Soon, he revealed that his efforts turned futile as the girl's family as well as the girl turned down his proposal, forcing him to marry a girl from his own caste.

Even though he did not taste success in marrying outside his caste, Mr. Siddaramaiah pledged his full support to inter-caste marriages and said the State government would extend all cooperation to couples wishing to enter into inter-caste marriages. He said inter-caste marriages would help eliminate the scourge of caste inequalities that had gained ground in society.

A day after recalling his love life, Mr. Siddaramaiah visited another of his favourite haunts as a student in Mysuru – the Mylari hotel. After a sumptuous breakfast of its dosas and idlis, Mr. Siddaramaiah tweeted that he was reminded of his student days. The next morning, he was back for breakfast at another branch of the Mylari hotel. Clearly, Mr. Siddaramaiah was reliving his student days during his three-day visit to Mysuru.

Troll for troll

When you are in the Opposition and in the eagerness to mock the ruling dispensation, you sometimes fail to check the veracity of the news that suits your requirements. The same happened with the BJP in Karnataka. It found a video of a bus driver driving with an umbrella in hand during the rain and it was quick to jump the gun. Within moments the BJP started trolling the ruling Congress highlighting the video which it said was the sorry state of transport services. But it turned out that it was a video shot by the conductor of the bus and the driver for fun. While the inquiry led to the suspension of both the driver and the conductor, it also gave ammunition to the ruling party and the Transport Minister to return the "favour". Having been trolled, the Minister was in no good mood and responded in strong words highlighting the "missing link between the eyes and the brain of BJP leaders".

Long answers!

Different sets of rules were apparently made for scribes and people in authority at a meet-the-press programme in Bengaluru to mark the one year of the Congress government in Karnataka. After a close to an hour-long speech on the government's performance by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the office-bearers of the Press Club of Bangalore and the Chief Minister himself told reporters to keep their questions short so that more scribes could ask questions. The reporters did follow the suggestion and kept their questions short. However, the Chief Minister's answers to questions were very long and repetitive. Before the 'question hour', the Chief Minister's speech was largely focused on the government's guarantees, on the Lok Sabha election results, reply to the Opposition charges, and on the Centre's poor response to drought in the State.

Laiqh A. Khan
Girish Pattanshetti
Nagesh Prabhu

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

Smt. Saroja Sudhindran
19 March 1940 - 27 May 1994

On her 30th anniversary
in everloving memory
of
my dear mother
Smt. Saroja Sudhindran
wife of Shri. T. K. Sudhindran,
former Principal,
Sir Theagaraya College, Chennai

Inserted by her daughter
Ms. Sujatha Sudhindran

'We should really start thinking of deploying 15-seater, 20-seater mini buses as last mile feeders. They will also work in terms of the economics, and be competitive to other modes,' says Pawan Mulukutla, Executive Director, Transport and Clean Air Programme at the WRI

Can Namma Metro's last mile connectivity gaps be filled by players beyond BMTC?

For years, commuters have had to depend on their cars or two-wheelers to fill the gap between home and metro station, and feeder shuttle bus services were seen as the best bet to address this

Rasheed Kappan
BENGALURU

Last mile connectivity was always the biggest gap in Bengaluru's Namma Metro scheme of things. As the Metro spread out far and wide in the city, this gap stood out as a perennial sore point. But the entry of BMTC Metro Feeder buses has finally begun to make an impact, while triggering another key question: Can the last mile be filled by players beyond BMTC?

Deploy minibuses

For years, commuters have had to depend on their cars or two-wheelers to fill that glaring gap between home and Metro Station, and from station to office/workplace and back. Inevitably, this added to the city's congestion, while exposing the lack of adequate parking spaces at most Metro stations. Feeder shuttle bus services were seen as the best bet to address this.

But are the long nine or 12-metre BMTC buses the right option for feeders?

"Bengaluru has big congestion issues with narrow roads around Metro stations. Our regular big buses will not work. We should really start thinking of deploying 15-seater, 20-seater mini buses as last mile feeders. They will also work in terms of the economics, and be competitive to other modes," explains Pawan Mulukutla, Executive Director, Transport and Clean Air Programme at the World Resources Institute (WRI) India. There has to be a method in the feeder system, its design and frequency. Pawan suggests setting up a Last Mile Cell at the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) with access to all the commuter data. Feeder bus frequency could be based on the number of people getting in and off the stations during peak and off-peak hours.

BMRCL and BMTC should align the frequency of buses, understand the patterns of where people are living around metro stations, and connect those. As Pawan points out, "This should be the way rather than saying let's deploy buses every 30 minutes and that's our frequency. The benefit of the Metro is lost if the last mile is not immediately available."

Uber shuttle buses

Talking of options, experts say it need not be all about BMTC buses. Says independent mobility analyst and consultant Sathya Arikutharam, "The city should now consider what Delhi has done, by giving licence to Uber Shuttle buses. They can aggregate mini buses, by repurposing so many modes. For example, company shuttle buses are mostly idle in the afternoons. They can be repurposed for smart travel so that people don't need to think of two-wheelers or cars at all for going out."

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) approval allows Uber to encourage upper middle class commuters to switch to public transport. The aggregator could set dynamic pricing but it should not be less than the peak fare of DTC air-conditioned buses. Sathya says the transport department here could regulate all these parameters and allow Uber shuttles to operate in designated zones.

Metro Mithra issues

Autorickshaws, if run professionally with a predefined fare structure, could be a real option. The Metro Mithra service was introduced at a few stations with this objective but failed to take off.

"Unfortunately, there are a lot of security issues at these stations. There are rowdy drivers who don't want to operate by meters and professionalism. That is why Metro Mithra autos were not able to get parking spaces at the Metro stations. They wrote to the police commissioner but in vain. They also requested BMRCL to ask the security guards to ensure some sort of harmony. Everybody is responsible but nobody is accountable," laments Sathya.

Community minibuses

To bridge the last mile, local communities too could run minibuses on a private-public partnership (PPP) model, says Pawan. "Such partnerships can involve residents' welfare associations (RWAs). For instance, in the J.P. Nagar - Konankunte area, there are so many big apartments with at least 10-15% of people who want to use the Metro. But the last mile is a deterrent. Now, if the last mile is starting from your community itself, and buses can be purchased on a PPP model, things will change," he elaborates.

The last mile, he says, should be thought of as a very innovative solution. Let BMTC use its logo, routes and planning. But involve other players in onboarding of operators, running it for RWAs to connect and giving them drop off and pickup, and scheduling.

Feeders in local area

But within the BMTC Metro feeder ecosystem, there are areas for improvement, says Yathish Kumar S., member of an active collective called 'Friends of BMTC.' "Feeders have to serve the internal areas within 3-4 km surrounding a Metro station. But there are some services that run on the same route as the regular services where the frequency is even higher. Just because they run between two Metro stations, they don't qualify as a Metro feeder service," he points out.

Yathish draws attention to the feeders that operate between K.R. Puram and Silk Board. "They literally run on the same route as 500A and 500B, where the frequency is really huge. That really does not make any sense."

Restricting the feeder service to areas in close proximity to a Metro station has its benefits. "Like in the Southern end of the green line, there are quite a few stations such as Vadarahalli, Yelachenahalli, and Talaghattapura, where the areas close to the stations are densely populated with several apartments. They prefer the Metro but the last mile is a problem. So, a loop service will work out."

The feeder service that runs from Brigade Meadows on Kanakapura Road to Konankunte Cross has good potential. "This is quite helpful considering the number of apartments there and the good frequency. If it gets more patronage and people get to know more about it, there will be an upswing in commuters," he feels.

But awareness is an issue. Although BMTC releases newspaper statements and displays information on its social media channels, many commuters tend to miss them. One option is to display the bus timings and routes within the train. The availability of feeders to multiple routes could be announced as the train approaches a station. This information could also be prominently displayed at the entrance and exits of all stations with creative visual design.

By March this month, the network of Metro feeder buses had expanded to 151 services across 43 stations. This is likely to be increased to 300 services. As a BMTC official informs, an estimated one lakh people take these buses every day. "BMTC has also installed QR code scanners at all stations. There is also an option to live-track a feeder bus," informs the official.

A new Centre for Smart Protein and Sustainable Materials Innovation launched by IKP Knowledge Park and GFI India

The centre aims to support start-ups in this space, offering infrastructure, equipment, legal, and regulatory assistance

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The rapid evolution of the food and material industries, driven by innovative technologies and growing consumer demand for ethical, sustainable, and healthier options, has spotlighted the increasing field of "alternative or smart proteins".

On May 25, a new Centre for Smart Protein and Sustainable Materials Innovation was launched by IKP Knowledge Park in collaboration with The Good Food Institute (GFI) in Bengaluru. The centre aims to support start-ups in this space, offering infrastructure, equipment, legal, and regulatory assistance.

(From left) Dr. Pranesh Sridharan, Dr. Gurmeet Singh, Dr. Priyankana Mukherjee, Aiyanna Belliappa, and Dr. Sridhar Ramanathan.

Food and climate

Sneha Singh, Acting Managing Director of GFI India, highlighted the global shift towards recognizing the interconnections between food and climate, emphasising the role of smart protein in addressing nutritional security. "Malnutrition is a significant issue. Through these avenues of smart programmes, we can bridge nutritional gaps. Last year at World Food India, smart protein emerged as a key topic, and now it's making its way into Indian discourse," Singh stated.

Deepanwita Chattopadhyay, Chairman & CEO of IKP Knowledge Park, emphasised the necessity of a "protein revolution" in India, akin to past agricultural revolutions. "Eighty percent of Indians are nutrient deficient, and traditional protein production is climate-inefficient. Through collaboration with GFI, we can advance smart or alternative proteins," she said.

Aiyanna Belliappa, Senior Innovation & Entrepreneurship Specialist at GFI India, outlined the three broad categories of smart protein production: plant-based, fermentation, and cultivated. Globally, the alternative protein sector has attracted $14.2 billion over the last decade, with year-on-year investment nearly doubling on average. In contrast, smart protein start-ups in India recorded a modest $17 million in investments across 2021 and 2022, spanning all three categories. However, there is a very huge potential for smart proteins in India, he said, owing to its large crop biodiversity, the skill sets and the growing biotech and food processing industry. He projected that with proper investment in research, incubation, industry, and regulation, the smart protein industry could be worth more than $4 billion by 2030. During a panel discussion titled 'Challenges that need to be addressed for the Smart Protein Industry to Emerge and Lead Globally,' Jinesh Shah, Founder of Alt X Ventures, reassured young entrepreneurs about the cyclical nature of the business world and the support network available.

"The issue of less investment for start-ups is not unique to the smart protein sector, but there is hope as India is seen as a biotech powerhouse," he said.

Infrastructure

Ezhil Subbain, CEO of String Bio, stressed the importance of collaboration and infrastructure. "Starting now, I would look for both national and international collaborations to expedite progress. Infrastructure is being built to support smart proteins, and investors are showing interest," she noted.

Dr. Gurmeet Singh of Transdisciplinary University, Bangalore, emphasised the role of incubators in academic settings. "Infrastructure alone isn't enough; expertise is crucial. Collaboration between centres of excellence and academia is key to progress," he asserted.

Entrepreneurs in the smart protein sector voiced their expectations from the government and incubation centres. Bharat Bakaraju, founder of Phyx44 Labs, highlighted the need for centralised hubs to facilitate idea exchange and innovation. He also called for a smart protein-focused equivalent to Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre to ease collaboration.

Smitha Devigere, CEO of Devigere Biosolutions, urged for more funding programs like Karnataka's ELEVATE to support a larger number of start-ups, comparing India's innovation landscape with Europe.

Abhay Rangan, Founder of Nourish You, pointed out the tax disparity as a major hurdle. "Most dairy products fall under the 5% GST tax bracket, whereas plant-based proteins are taxed at 18%. We need a separate category for vegan products to ensure relevant and fair taxation," he argued.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 27, 1974

Reported Move for Another Maharashtra Office in Belgaum

Belgaum, May 26: Closely following on the heels of the controversy over Maharashtra's move in opening its office here without the knowledge of the Karnataka Government, has come a report of a fresh initiative taken by the former to locate another office here. Besides the Divisional Office (Executivce Engineer's) of the Tillari-Hydro electric scheme which is already here, Maharashtra is contemplating to open an office of the Assistant Engineer of the same project. Search for a suitable building is said to be on and the new office may be opened anytime, it is learnt.

The latest move on the part of the Maharashtra Government has given credence to the theory advanced by pro-Kannada circles that Maharashtra's action is politically motivated.

Telephone System to be Improved

Bangalore, May 26. Mr. K. Brahmananda Reddi, Union Minister, for Communications, told newsmen, here to-day that the Bangalore Telephone System would be able to give better performance in about six months with the various improvements to the system on hand. The department was very much aware of the shortcomings of the system and the obsolete and strained equipment at the Central Telephone ex-change was the cause, he said. A microwave route linking Bombay to Calicut and to Bangalore would be commissioned with in a few years, according to a note on the working of the telephone system.

CITYBEATS

For four-legged friends

JUNE 2
Maverick & Farmer has launched the Pup Cup for its canine customers, in association with CARE to raise funds and find forever families. The cup is specifically crafted for furry patrons and is a concoction made with all-natural, dog-safe ingredients, which will also be a permanent fixture on the menu.
At Maverick & Farmer, Ulsoor and Koramangala.

Beat the heat

ONGOING
Naturals has introduced PSG – a trio of pineapple, strawberry, and guava ice cream in their summertime happiness range. These three fruits make for a delicious ice cream scoop made from the the best produce from Mahabaleshwar and Allahabad. Launched on May 24, the flavours will be available for two months.
On at pan-India naturals outlets

Get grooving

MAY 30
Suzonn will perform live at Koramangala SOCIAL this weekend. Suzonn has carved a niche as a musician who creates a symphony of emotions. The concert organisers term it an event that embodies the celebration of creativity and the pulsating energy of Bengaluru's music culture.
From 8pm at Koramangala Social, tickets available on Insider.in.

A precarious reliance

Madhumita Murgia talks with Vidushi Marda, a lawyer and researcher, about her debut book *Code Dependent: Living in the Shadow of AI*

Ruth Dhanaraj

Man vs machine Author Madhumita Murgia makes a compelling case on the pros and cons of AI in her book *Code Dependent*.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

It cannot be denied that as a race, human beings have become increasingly dependent on machines and automation. With the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI), our reliance on technology has further deepened, resulting in a diminished use of mental faculties.

In her debut book *Code Dependent: Living in the Shadow of AI* (Pan Macmillan), Madhumita Murgia delves into the many dangers that await if we are not mindful. In a recent discussion with Vidushi Marda, a lawyer and researcher, at Bangalore International Centre, Madhumita touched on how human beings would be exploited by this innovation if it was not closely monitored.

"As a biologist and immunologist working on vaccine design, I realised I didn't make a very good scientist in practice," laughs Madhumita. She adds, "I loved the idea of it, but the doing of the science was quite a lonely, closed-off endeavour."

"So I decided to try something different by communicating complex topics, which included science and that's how I ended up as a journalist at a magazine about technology, innovation, change and entrepreneurship. That was my introduction to the world of tech."

"I was fascinated by the perspective of complexity – explaining how something worked, studying its implications when it is functional and very early on AI was the sort of culmination of those things."

Madhumita says AI was considered "a fringe topic" by scientists who saw it as something that would never work, even in 2013.

According to Madhumita, AI was already changing the present and she wanted to look at how cultures and communities were being affected.

"I began writing in 2021 and I finished in 2023 just as Chat GPT came out making the stories even more urgent and relevant, showing the impact of daily human lives."

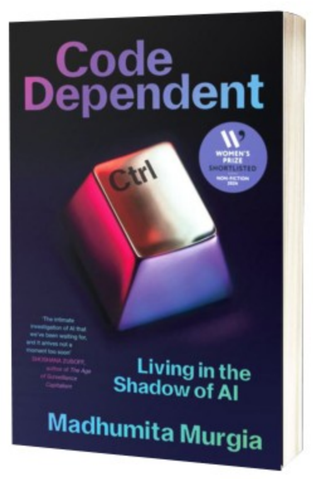
To Vidushi Marda's question about her reasoning for penning *Code Dependent*, Madhumita says, "Most media coverage, both in India and abroad, focuses on either tech or the business of the technology. I wanted to write something that looked at the stories of ordinary people and the unexpected, unintended consequences of how AI changed their lives."

Excerpts from their conversation:

Vidushi Marda (VM): Tell us about content moderators and marginalised people in this narrative. How do they play a part in all this?
Madhumita Murgia (MM): There's a misconception due to the term artificial intelligence – it gives you the idea that there's an intelligence with an ability to self learn, which isn't the case. Even the most advanced AI still have to be trained by humans. Most of the time the training is done by thousands of workers in factories, usually in the developing world, including India.

They spend hours teaching these systems and while many actions are easy for humans to execute, they are quite complex for AI systems to recognise. I have travelled to many places to talk to these people about how AI changed their lives, prospects and opportunities.

VM: Content moderators don't really know who they are working for; they don't see where their work ends up and they can't advocate for themselves. How do the dynamics play out when you are checking for content and reviewing data?



MM: I met with data workers and found find that apart from learning digital skills, they are unaware of the role they play in the development of AI. Content moderation involves people looking at some of the worst content on the internet and filtering it for us and this includes everything from terrorism and bombings to child sexual harassment and acts of violence. Apart from searching them out, they are having to train AI systems to do it.

This leaves a deep psychological impact on them. Not only are they training systems that are going to make them obsolete, but in the process giving themselves long term post-traumatic stress disorder. And as we build more sophisticated AI systems, these moderators need to handle larger amounts of data.

VM: Where do you think AI has made the furthest strides?
MM: Healthcare has been the brightest spot for AI so far. For instance, the Adivasi community didn't have access to primary health care centres, but now thanks to AI that gap has been bridged. An upcoming expedition to Everest will be testing out an AI system to diagnose particular chest conditions in the population living there.

AI has revolutionised people's access to being diagnosed and the pros outweigh the cons. Two other areas where AI is going places is in fundamental science and education.

VM: Tell us about facial recognition systems and their controversial history.
MM: Most people don't realise their faces are everywhere – from social media sites to CCTV footage – and this global web of faces is being used to train AI systems. Though this is being done to improve security, ironically facial recognition systems are inaccurate at identifying female faces or darker skin tones. The error rate is way higher for these groups when compared to Caucasian or male faces, resulting in innocent people being hauled up for things they didn't do.

VM: If a system doesn't work, should we keep at it? On the other hand, 15 years later we have near-perfect facial recognition systems. What do you think of humans versus automation?
MM: I don't think any technology is ever going to be 100% perfect, particularly AI, which is a statistical system that works on predictions. But, people have a tendency to trust in the output of the machine despite errors creeping up. Without guardrails in place, no one is held accountable for the outcomes. This is serious in many ways, least of all when there is an error in identifying faces.

Incidents with deep fakes and malicious actors show how difficult it is to prove a crime or prevent it from recurring. Every time you take down a site, another one pops up and there is no regulatory body that can effectively monitor this.

VM: In your book, humans are at the centre of the narrative. What is your hope for how the conversation should shift?
MM: Technology is powerful and can change our lives for the better. In practice though, I've found it is failing, especially those who need it the most. Predictive technology often ends up singling out members of immigrant communities and the disadvantaged. While researchers are working on AI, there should be a set of people working on how can we have a society that has both AI and preserves the dignity of humans.

Just as medical drugs are tested before being prescribed, we need to find ways to upgrade and regulate AI within the current industrial regulations. We need to uncover cases where it has worked well and where it hasn't, in order to design better systems.

Homage to a royal heritage

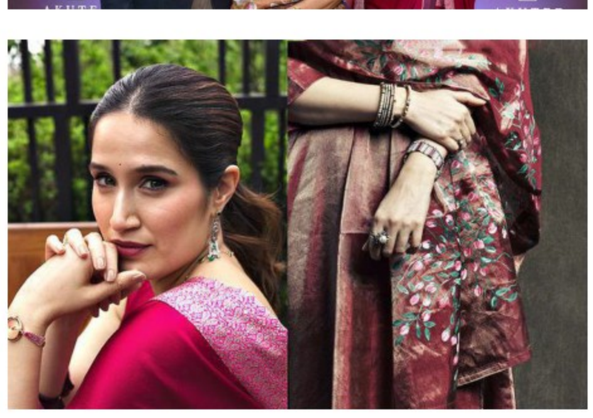
Anagha Maareesha

Actor Sagarika Ghatge Khan, who hails from the erstwhile royal house of Kolhapur and is a descendent of Maharaja Tukojirao Holkar III, weaves her rich legacy into her fashion brand, Akutee that launched in 2023.

Akutee, which means princess in Sanskrit and Marathi, offers delicate bespoke garments such as saris, dupattas, co-ord sets and more, in subtle pastels and deep jewel-tones. The pieces are hand-painted by Sagarika's mother, Urmila Ghatge, along with a team of artists. The actor, with her mother and her husband, former India cricketer Zaheer Khan, were in Bengaluru last weekend as part of the Four Seasons Festive Showcase.

The actor shares how the brand derives a lot from her home and life in Maharashtra. "Kolhapur is home; it's where my roots are. I grew up there until I was sent to boarding school – Mayo College in Ajmer. But my holidays were always spent in Kolhapur with family and cousins. My values, tradition, love for sports, all come from growing up there," she says. Sagarika describes Akutee as an ode to all the women in her family who she grew up watching and/or reading about in history, some of whom were princesses, like her great grandmother Tarabai Rani Saheb. "Everything I've learnt and seen from them, is what the ethos of the brand is – classic, elegant, and minimal. It is about giving value to what you are wearing," adds the actor, who is best known for her role in the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Chak De! India*.

Fit for a queen Actor Sagarika Ghatge with her mother Urmila and husband Zaheer Khan, close-ups from the collection.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



The design language in the garments takes a floral route. Intricate flowers grace the pallus of the saris and borders of the dupattas. The designs are hand-painted by the actor's mothe. "Apart from being an artist, my mum is also very fond of gardening. When I was a child, she used to paint her saris and even my clothes. A lot of her designs used to be florals. Any time there was a new flower in the garden, it would also be on her saris. Today, it is all about bringing them back for our collection. There are so many pieces in our trunks at home. We are inspired by that and are trying to recreate that," Sagarika shares.

The garments range from traditional hand-woven dupattas and saris, to modern pieces like jackets and co-ord sets. The palette ranges from blush pink, lavender and dusty golds, to deep emerald, maroons and copper. Sagarika says, "When it comes to both colour and style, it is not about what is trending today. That is not what Akutee is. Akutee is timeless."

The design process and hand painting is very personal, she says. The brand has no designers, and Sagarika and her mother are the ones who ideate and create the patterns and motifs. "We are very clear about spending a certain number of hours on each garment. A lot of our collection was easy because my mum had already painted some; she has been painting since she was 16, so we had so many designs ready to recreate," she adds.

All the fabrics used in the collection are handwoven. One can spot silk, organza, zari thread, Chanderi and Benaras tissue. The dyes that they use are eco-friendly and azo-free, which means they are non-toxic and organic. Sagarika explains how the fabric is the hero of the garment, especially because her aim is to make saris that last for generations. "We are giving importance to the fabric, and not just the art and the embellishment. I would like Akutee clothing to be preserved for three or four generations, just like how I have inherited garments from my family," she says.

Up next, the brand is looking to expand into crockery. Similar to the garments, they will also be hand-painted. On the personal front, Sagarika is looking forward to doing more movie projects. She recently acquired the rights to an Argentine novel, *All Yours*, which will be adapted to screen.

Priced upwards of ₹5,600. Available on akutee.store

When art, science, and nature met

Stunning confluence The artist and her work. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Chitrakala Parishath buzzed with excitement as Kanchan Rathna's solo exhibition, 'Murmurs and Murmurations', was unveiled on May 22. The unique collection, centered on eco prints themed on patterns in nature, was inaugurated by Chiranjiv Singh, IAS (Retd) and former Ambassador of India to UNESCO.

"I haven't seen anything like this," said Chiranjiv Singh, admiring the works crafted exclusively on handmade paper using natural materials such as leaves, flowers, bark, and colours derived from onion skins, rust, and alum. The exhibition showcased Rathna's exploration of fractals and the Fibonacci sequence in nature, blending art with mathematical elegance.

Fractals are infinitely complex shapes with repeating patterns at every scale, often created by starting with a simple shape and applying a rule over and over. These intricate patterns can be found in coastlines and snowflakes, and even describe mathematical concepts.

"This work is unique where art meets science," Chiranjiv continued. "Historically, art and science have always gone hand in hand, as exemplified by artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci." He praised Rathna for her powerful and aesthetically pleasing works that encourage a greener lifestyle.

The exhibition was on at Chitrakala Parishath from May 22-26. For more information, visit www.kanchanrathna.com.

Kerala Opposition to stage agitation over liquor policy

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

M.B. Rajesh

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) in Kerala appeared to lay the ground for a tumultuous Assembly session in June by accusing the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government of soliciting bribes from bar owners to promulgate a "permissive liquor policy" to help them reap huge profits at a significant social and financial cost to breadwinners and their families.

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan has demanded the resignation of Excise Minister M.B. Rajesh and Tourism Minister Mohammed Riyaz, whom he accused of being complicit in a corrupt plot to extend bar timings and lift the ban on the sale of liquor on the first of every month.

'Corrupt scheme'

At a press conference in Kochi, Mr. Satheeshan alleged that the alluring scope of corruption, not public good or statecraft, informed the LDF's policymaking. In Kozhikode, IUML leader P.K. Kunhalikutty demanded a judicial probe.

The UDF has premised its impending anti-government agitation on a leaked voice note of a bar owners' association office-bearer urging members to collect money to sway the government in favour of bar owners.

The association has since distanced itself from the message and denied any deceitful move to influence government policy.

"The minutes of the meeting denied by Ministers have appeared in the public domain. Instead of ordering a police probe to trace the source of the leak, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan should break his silence," he demanded.

Kerala has one of the highest per capita alcohol consumption rates in the country.

The powerful social forces see red after reports emerged that the LDF government contemplated opening bars in IT parks and watering down current liquor sales restrictions, including issuing more licences.

Tourism Director Sikha Surendran said media reports of the May 21 meeting of tourism stakeholders were misleading. She said it was a routine meeting of industry groupings of resorts, hotels, houseboats, and event management groups to promote Kerala tourism. It had no bearing on government policymaking and was not ordered by the Tourism Minister.

Rain, gales hit power supply in several parts of Telangana

Transmission and distribution lines were snapped as tree branches had fallen on power cables

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

A damaged transformer in Nagarkurnool district following heavy rain and gales on Sunday.

Rain coupled with gales caused a breakdown in power supply in different parts of the Greater Hyderabad area as also in Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Jogulamba-Gadwal, Wanaparthy, Yadadri-Bhongir, Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Nalgonda and Medchal-Malkajigiri district on Sunday evening.

According to information reaching here, transmission and distribution lines were snapped, tree branches had fallen on power cables, poles were damaged, and uprooted, transformers and fuse/switch boxes were damaged, and banners and other material were blown on to power lines due to heavy winds.

Officials of the Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Ltd (TGSPDCL) stated that staff of the utility has got down to restoration work immediately after the rain stopped. In City, the gale disrupted power supply in L.B. Nagar, Vanasthalipuram, Saroornagar, Nagole, Malkajigiri, Kacheguda, Nallakunta, Amberpet, Abdullapurmet and other areas had to suffer breakdown in power supply.

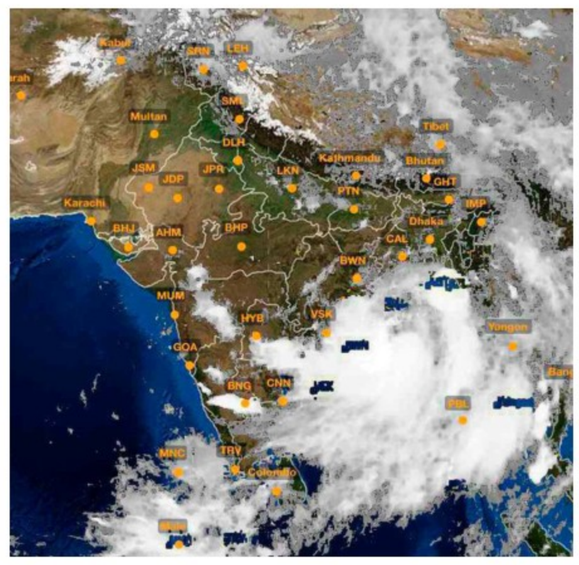
The city's surrounding areas such Hayathnagar, Pedda Amberpet, Turka Yamjal, Keesara, Ghatkesar, Mansoorabad and other areas too had breakdowns in power supply as metal sheets of sheds were thrown onto power lines due to the wind intensity.

Chairman and Managing Director of TGSPDCL Md. Musharraf Faruqui said large trees and their branches had fallen onto 33 KV and 11 KV feeder lines at several places in districts affecting the power supply. The field staff had taken up restoration work removing the tree branches from power lines and the supply was restored in several feeders already.

Restoration of low-tension lines at some places was still in progress, he stated.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. Heat wave conditions likely to prevail in most places over Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab. Thunderstorm and gusty winds likely to prevail over Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Kerala.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	34.0	34.6	25.5	Kozhikode	—	32.6	26.6
Ahmedabad	—	43.2	30.6	Kurnool	—	38.4	27.4
Aizawl	34.0	33.7	23.2	Lucknow	—	43.5	31.1
Allahabad	—	44.4	30.9	Madurai	—	37.0	26.5
Bengaluru	—	30.2	21.6	Mangaluru	1.0	31.3	25.0
Bhopal	—	45.4	29.4	Mumbai	—	34.3	28.6
Bhubaneswar	—	37.5	28.0	Mysuru	—	30.0	—
Chandigarh	—	44.5	25.9	New Delhi	—	46.3	28.2
Chennai	4.0	38.9	29.0	Patna	—	40.0	32.1
Coimbatore	—	33.0	24.5	Port Blair	16.0	32.0	26.7
Dehradun	—	40.2	26.6	Puducherry	—	35.2	38.4
Gangtok	0.1	26.3	19.2	Pune	0.5	36.2	26.9
Goa	—	34.3	29.0	Raipur	—	43.7	31.2
Guwahati	—	38.0	27.6	Ranchi	—	34.2	25.5
Hubballi	—	32.0	24.0	Shillong	—	26.4	19.0
Hyderabad	—	40.2	27.3	Shimla	—	30.6	18.6
Imphal	27	29.9	21.3	Srinagar	—	32.7	15.7
Jaipur	—	25.6	32.0	Thiruvananthapuram	29.0	29.0	23.7
Kochi	9.0	29.8	24.8	Tiruchi	—	36.5	28.4
Kohima	6.0	25.3	18.9	Vijayawada	45.0	38.0	26.4
Kolkata	6.0	31.2	26.8	Visakhapatnam	—	35.0	29.7

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	..—	..—	.37	...184	...139	
Bengaluru	..—	..—	.12	8	...126	
Chennai	.11	..—	119	32	32	
Delhi	.52	..18	.56	...322	...175	
Hyderabad	.24	..20	.15	63	95	
Kolkata	...4	..56	.16	19	19	
Lucknow	...4	..61	.27	...229	...148	
Mumbai	...9	..29	.32	20	...115	
Pune	..—	7	.50	...234	...166	
Visakhapatnam	.12	..52	.41	96	...121	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 346 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizwal, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 13.

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Digital evidence being gathered to zero in on A.P. poll violence accused

Rajulapudi Srinivas
VIJAYAWADA

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted to inquire into the election-related violence in Andhra Pradesh is making all-out efforts to arrest all the accused involved, says Vineet Brijlal, SIT head and Inspector-General of Police, Special Investigation Bureau.

"The SIT has directed booking of two more cases, and the total number of cases has gone up to 35 in Palnadu, Anantapur and Tirupati districts. We are coordinating with the Deputy Inspectors-General and Superintendents of Police concerned to arrest the culprits," Mr. Vineet Brijlal told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

Hundreds of trouble-makers had burnt vehicles, threw stones, attacked their rivals, damaged electronic voting machines at a few places, and resorted to violence on May 13, when polling was held, and the day after, he said.

"As many as 800 people were involved in the violent incidents during three days. About 550 accused have been arrested so far, and a hunt is on to catch the remaining offenders," Mr. Brijlal said.

In the attack on Pulivarthi Venkata Maniprasad (Nani), Chandragiri TDP contestant, 13 accused were arrested, Mr. Brijlal said, and added that "the situation is under control now".

"We are gathering digital and scientific evidence in all the cases. A few accused have escaped to Mysuru, Bengaluru and other places. Officers are tracking their movements," Mr. Brijlal said.

13 Maoist militia members surrender before police in Andhra Pradesh's ASR district

The Hindu Bureau
PADERU

ASR district SP Tuhin Sinha with the surrendered Maoist militia members at Paderu on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Thirteen militia members of the banned CPI (Maoist) from the Ginnelakota pocket of Pedabayalu surrendered before the Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district police in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

The militia members – all hailing from Ginnelakota and Jamiguda panchayats in Pedabayalu mandal and aged 24 to 38 – helped the Left-wing extremists organise meetings and supplied food. Some of them took part in the *praja* courts and were involved in arson.

Addressing the media, ASR Superintendent of Police Tuhin Sinha said that there was no proper leadership left for the Maoists in the Pedabayalu area after the arrests and surrenders. The community welfare activities undertaken by the district police in the area also encouraged the Left-wing extremists to surrender.

After surrender, the Maoists receive various benefits including land from the government as per norms, he said, adding that such initiatives were helping them lead a normal life.

Monsoon at the doorstep

On edge: Visitors thronging the Fort Kochi beach despite a warning from the district administration as the sea has turned rough with conditions favourable for the onset of the monsoon. H. VIBHU

BRS urges FCI to seek ED probe into paddy sale

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has demanded that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) lodge a complaint with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and CBI into "a ₹1,100-crore scam in the global tenders" called for the disposal of 35 lakh tonnes of paddy and procurement of fine rice.

Addressing a press conference in Hyderabad, BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao said it was a strange coincidence that the same four agencies/companies had secured both the tenders of paddy purchase and fine rice supply from/to the State Civil Supplies Corporation.

In Tiruppur, a tale of communal harmony

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUPPUR

Muslims being welcomed during the consecration of a Ganesha temple at Ottapalayam in Tiruppur district on Sunday.

A temple of Lord Ganesha, constructed on three cents of land donated by the Jamaath of the locality, was consecrated at Ottapalayam in Tiruppur district on Sunday.

The long-standing Hindu-Muslim brotherhood in the locality was further cemented by the gesture of the Muslims, the residents said.

The consecration was marked by members of the Muslim community arriving in a procession and making the traditional *seervarisai* offering of fruits, flowers and other items on seven plates.

The members of the RMJ Rose Garden Muslim Jamaat mosque had donated the land, worth ₹6 lakh, after learning that the Hindus in the locality were unable to find suitable land.

Members of a mosque donated land, worth ₹6 lakh, to Hindus in the locality as they were unable to find suitable land for the temple

Children of the two communities were seen mingling with the elders in the procession. The Muslim members, who were welcomed with garlands, went up to the fire pit and made the offerings to the priests. The Jamaath members also organised an *annadhanam* for the consecration.

Two of family drown in Chalakudy river

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

Two members of a family, including a teenage girl, who went to bathe in the Chalakudy river, drowned at Manjali, near North Paravur, on Sunday.

The deceased have been identified as Jwala Lakshmi, 13, daughter of Vinu Chemmanattu of Kodakara, and Megha, 27, daughter of Rahul Kuttikkattuparambil of Puthenvelikkara.

Megha's sister Neha, who was rescued by the local people, is undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

She has been admitted to the medical intensive care unit and is out of danger, according to police sources.

Fire and Rescue Services personnel with the support of scuba divers recovered the bodies after an hour-long search. The accident happened around 11.30 a.m. when five of the family reached the river to bathe and to collect mussels. They entered the river near the Kozhithuruthu Bund, Puthenvelikkara. There were strong currents in the stretch of the river.

Local people, who heard the call for help, rushed to the spot and saved three of them.

The family members had been visiting their relatives in Elanthikkara for a death ceremony.

300 farmers held for protesting against check-dam construction

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUPPUR

About 300 farmers who staged a protest opposing the construction of a check-dam by Kerala across Silandhi river, a tributary of the Amaravati, were arrested on Sunday.

The farmers were blocked by the police at the check-post on the Udumalpet-Munnar Road, where they sat in protest and raised slogans criticising the Kerala government for acting against the Supreme Court directive on the sharing of water by Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

State Coordinator of the Tamil Nadu Farmers' Protection Association, Eason Murugasamy, demanded that the Tamil Nadu government immediately take steps to prevent Kerala from constructing the check-dam and diverting the water source of the State.

"It is shameful that construction materials for the check-dam are being transported from Tamil Nadu by 50 trucks every day," Mr. Murugasamy said, wondering if the State government was serious about safeguarding the interests of its farmers. "If the State government fails to act on the issue, the farmers will block all routes to Kerala," he said.

A large posse of police personnel, led by Udumalpet DSP Sukumaran, were deployed for security. All the farmers who were arrested and lodged in a private marriage hall were released later . In view of the protest, vehicles travelling from Kerala to Tamil Nadu were diverted through Amaravati Nagar.

> It is shameful that construction materials for the check-dam are being transported from Tamil Nadu by 50 trucks every day
>
> **EASON MURUGASAMY**
> State Coordinator of the Tamil Nadu Farmers' Protection Association

Absolute numbers

ECI should do everything to reinforce people's faith in the democratic process

A total of 58 Lok Sabha seats in eight States and Union Territories voted on Saturday in the sixth and penultimate phase of the general election 2024. With this, polling has been completed in 28 States and Union Territories, in 486 constituencies. Voting is also over for 105 Assembly constituencies of Odisha. The last phase of polling will be on June 1 for the remaining 57 seats and counting of votes will take place on June 4. Sporadic incidents of violence were reported from West Bengal which also reported the highest polling percentage at 79.47. In Jammu and Kashmir, the Anantnag-Rajouri seat recorded a turnout of 54.30%, an impressive high. Urban apathy continued in the seven seats of Delhi which went to the polls with just 57.67% of the electorate turning out to vote. The searing heat wave prevailing in north India did not help matters. The Election Commission of India (ECI) released, for the first time in this general election, the absolute number of votes cast in each constituency for the first five phases. The ECI came out with the data a day after the Supreme Court of India refused to direct the commission to disclose details of Form 17 C, which contains this data at the booth level and is handed out to all the polling agents of the candidates.

The ECI has alleged, inappropriately, there to be a "pattern of false narratives and mischievous design to vitiate electoral process". It is true that concerns have been raised by several actors about the electoral process, and it is possible that a part of it could be due to ignorance or even out of mischief. A mature and appropriate response expected of the body that is tasked with overseeing the largest democratic exercise on the planet is to provide information to the public that removes such concerns. The commission opposed the disclosure of Form 17C in the Supreme Court – all the while insinuating at a conspiracy to vitiate the electoral process. Complaints brought to its attention by anyone should be addressed in a manner that behoves a robust democracy. It is indeed the duty of the ECI to ensure that the electoral process is not vitiated, and the best way to achieve it is to ensure the maximum transparency that is administratively possible. The ECI has done well by publishing the data on the absolute number of voters, and it could proactively look for more measures that could reinforce public faith in the process and in its own integrity.

Punishing Hamas

Netanyahu is rendering Israel's global standing weaker

The International Court of Justice's ruling, that Israel must immediately stop its military offensive in Rafah, the southernmost city of Gaza, is the latest setback for the Jewish nation in a war that grinds on with heavy civilian casualties and no end in sight. In January, while hearing a genocide case against Israel that was filed by South Africa, the United Nation's top court had asked Tel Aviv to take measures to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza. The court refused to order a ceasefire then, but has now come to the conclusion that Israel's Rafah offensive could lead to a complete or partial destruction of the Palestinian population in the city. The court has also asked Israel to keep the Rafah crossing with Egypt open for aid delivery and allow UN investigators to gather evidence about alleged war crimes, besides demanding an immediate release of all hostages. The ICJ ruling comes days after the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, claimed that Israeli and Hamas leaders had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, and sought arrest warrants against Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, its Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif and Ismail Haniyeh. Israel appears to be unperturbed by these developments. Immediately after the ICJ issued its ruling, Israeli fighter jets pounded Rafah. The ICJ rulings are binding, but the court lacks the mechanisms to implement them.

More than seven months after the war began, which was triggered by Hamas's October 7 cross border attack on Israel in which at least 1,200 people were killed, Tel Aviv seems to be fighting in the dark. When it launched the war, Mr. Netanyahu said he would crush Hamas and release hostages. Today, Israel is fighting Hamas even in northern and central Gaza where it had earlier declared victory. At least 120 hostages, most of them feared dead, are still in Hamas's captivity. The war is marked not just by the incompetence of the Israeli Defence Forces. Its disproportionate use of force on Gaza has made the strip into a graveyard, which has turned international public opinion against Israel. Last week's decision by Norway, Ireland and Spain to recognise the state of Palestine shows how the line of thinking is changing even in the West. Mr. Netanyahu appears to be irrationally adamant today. His only focus is on a war that has done little to bolster Israel's security. Israel has not met its military objectives; its deterrence has been broken twice, peace with Arabs stands shattered, it stands isolated in the world, there could be an arrest warrant against its leaders and there is a ruling by the ICJ against the way it is conducting the war. By seeking to punish the entire Palestinian population in Gaza for what Hamas did, Mr. Netanyahu is rendering Israel's standing weaker and the international support for the Palestinian cause to grow stronger.

The spectre of nuclear conflict, once again

M.K. Narayanan

is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal

After every major war or conflict, questions tend to be raised as to whether the ruling elites at the time had failed to see the writing on the wall and, hence, did not prepare for the possibility of a major conflict, or face up to the threat that lay ahead. Today, as some nations engage in sabre-rattling and hold out the threat not merely of war but also of using the 'ultimate weapon', it is important to raise this question yet again. The truth is, perhaps, hidden between layers of rhetoric that prominent leaders or their spokesmen indulge in from time to time. There is, yet, time for nations to sit-up and take notice as also discuss and discern hidden meanings behind the volley of rhetoric being seen.

What the leaders of France and Russia say

Many leaders, at least in the West, have taken due note of French President Emmanuel Macron's so-called 'apocalyptic vision' and what the future, hence, looks like. There is also more than a hint in Mr. Macron's remarks of the danger of nuclear 'annihilation', and unlike many previous outpourings of the French President, many Europeans this time are sitting-up and taking notice. Russia's so called 'mis-adventure' seems to be the starting point of the French President's 'doomsday' scenario, since he believes that the Ukraine war has changed Russia and that the Russian President Vladimir Putin's 'nuclear threats' should not be ignored. As these remarks emanate from one of Europe's most prominent leaders, the main thrust is on the impact that this would have on European security.

The French President is not inhibited on this occasion on his use of the term 'French Nuclear Deterrent' which has outgrown its previous '*force de frappe*' metaphor. Today, France is in possession of what would be among the largest nuclear arsenals in the world, and hence, the French President's utterances carry considerable weight. Against this backdrop and evidence of increasing Russian belligerence in the Ukraine Theatre, a possible use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine is no longer in the realm of fantasy. It does give rise to the spectre of a potential nuclear exchange. The French President is said to be planning to put forward his case on the nuclear aspect at a meeting of the European Political Community to be held in July this year.

It is not for the first time since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, that the spectre of a nuclear conflict is coming to haunt the globe. The absence of leaders of consequence across the world, essentially those who have significant influence on world affairs, is aggravating the situation, making it more frightening. As it is, most parts of the world are going through extreme economic turbulence, leading to widespread problems. The nuclear fuse, which earlier tended to be long, appears of late to have shrunk. With a new array of weapons available to many nuclear weapon powers, this spells trouble. The absence of regular exchanges among nuclear weapon powers, notwithstanding the several protocols that are in place, is further cause for concern. Erstwhile nuclear guarantees, thus, appear to be fraying at the edges.

The absence of leaders of consequence, essentially those who have significant influence on world affairs, is aggravating the situation

Aggravating this situation further are certain remarks attributed to Mr. Putin during the annual Victory Day Parade in Moscow on May 9 this year. In his address, the Russian President observed that 'his nuclear forces were always on alert and that Moscow would not tolerate any Western threats'. He also added that 'while Russia would do everything to prevent a global clash, at the same time we will not allow anyone to threaten us .... our strategic forces are always on alert'.

Well prior to this, in November 2023, Russia had revoked its ratification of a major international agreement, *viz*., the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which is intended to prevent all forms of nuclear explosions, either for civilian or military purposes. The claim made by Russia, that revoking the ban was intended to balance the nuclear playing field with the United States, (which had never ratified it), is specious at best.

The international community's response to this, not unexpectedly, has been extremely hostile, with several countries expressing concern that this step reversed the shift towards greater confidence in the nuclear arms regime. Meantime across the world, countries such as China are going ahead with enhancing their nuclear profile. China has very recently completed sea trials for its aircraft supercarrier fitted with electromagnetic catapults for launching aircraft. It is well on its way to complete building a fourth aircraft carrier.

The discussion at Hoover

Even as Europe and parts of the world seem to be haunted by the spectre of a possible nuclear armageddon, totally unconnected with this was an academic discussion on nuclear matters at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, U.S., which was attended by delegates from the U.S. and India (this writer was a delegate). The discussions centered around the U.S.-India civil nuclear Deal (2005-08) and how it had brought about a fundamental change in attitude, not only on nuclear matters but also on the entire gamut of relations between the U.S. and India. What the discussions seemed to imply was that there are many more things available in heaven than we are aware of. There were no references in the meeting to the nuclear stand-off in Europe, but the message emanating from the discussions seemed to imply that the methodology employed during the nuclear deal negotiations had relevance to many current disputes.

When India and the U.S. undertook to negotiate a nuclear deal, they stood at opposite poles of the nuclear order. India had not signed on to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a foundational treaty governing global nuclear rules. It had also refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). India had carried out five nuclear tests in 1998, leading to the imposition of sanctions on India's nuclear programme.

Consequent on the U.S.-India nuclear deal, most of the roadblocks that prevented India from joining the global nuclear regime were lifted. In the process, both sides made significant concessions. India agreed to separate its nuclear programme into civilian and military nuclear programmes, in return for linking permanent safeguards for permanent fuel supplies. India agreed to adhere to certain of the export control regulations. It accepted a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing. The U.S., in turn, amended its domestic laws, and the U.S. Congress made possible the passage of legislative provision through enactment of the Hyde Act and the 123 Agreements. The U.S. also took the lead in approaching the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to ease nuclear restrictions on India. The U.S. and India thereafter coordinated their efforts to obtain an India Specific Safeguards Agreement from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This gave India a status similar to that of a nuclear weapon state under the Non Proliferation Treaty.

The key to improving ties

The message from the discussions at the Hoover Institution seemed to be that the deal had even more significance than being merely an arrangement about revising India's nuclear status. Over the years since the deal was finalised in 2008, India-U.S. relations had attained new heights.

From technology denial, India had become a major technology partner of the U.S. Many of the mental cobwebs that previously existed had been removed and India and the U.S. had achieved a new plateau as far as economic and defence relations were concerned. India had also become an essential partner of the U.S. on many regional and global issues.

The discussions unambiguously seemed to reinforce the view that overcoming the psychological divide was critical to improving relations and relationships between countries. Breaching the impregnable wall of disbelief, leading to a subsequent transformation would inevitably have a beneficial impact. From India's standpoint, given that the India-U.S. nuclear deal originated from India's desire to obtain high grade uranium from outside to complement its energy requirements, the deal confirms that nuclear energy could be a major resource for peaceful purposes.

A door to a housing scheme, tribals find hard to open

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India is home to numerous Adivasi groups, with 75 identified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) across States. According to official data, they comprise around 14.6 lakh households. These tribes reside in scattered, remote, and often inaccessible areas, characterised by their reliance on methods and tools for their livelihood that predate the advent of agriculture, low literacy rates, economic backwardness, and stagnant populations.

Recognising their backwardness, the Government of India announced the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission in 2023-24 to improve the socio-economic conditions of PVTGs. In line with this initiative, the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) was launched in November 2023, with a budget of ₹24,000 crore.

The PM JANMAN seeks to provide essential services to PVTGs, which includes safe housing, clean drinking water, and sanitation through 11 critical interventions. The PVTGs and frontline officials face challenges in using a mobile application to register for the 'Housing scheme', the biggest Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme in the PM JANMAN which aims to reach 4.90 lakh PVTG households by 2026. Its objective is to ensure that every PVTG household has access to secure and habitable housing, safeguarding them from environmental challenges and providing them with a sense of security. Households under the scheme are entitled to receive ₹2.39 lakh each in three instalments.

The fallout of data mismatch

Data collection (registration) in DBTs is a key factor that dictates the delivery of entitlements to citizens. This is evident in instances such as the widespread wrongful deletions of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) workers and the suspension of Pradhan Mantri KIsan SAmman Nidhi (PM KISAN) entitlements, often due to mismatches between the details entered during registration and Aadhaar records.

We recorded the registration process and interviewed community members and frontline officials involved in implementing the scheme in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Odisha. The findings show that PM JANMAN Housing encounters inclusivity and accessibility challenges for PVTGs and frontline officials.

If set right, the PM JANMAN will be yet another opportunity to transform the lives of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

App use and confusion

The Government of India has provided an 'Awaas+' mobile app to block/panchayat-level officials to register PVTG households for the PM JANMAN Housing scheme. The app gathers beneficiaries data in three primary areas – it records the geographical location of households, noting their block, panchayat, and village; it captures household profiles, incorporating geo-tagging for planned construction locations, and then collects bank account details for cash transfers.

Having a jobcard is mandatory for PM JANMAN Housing registration. However, the widespread deletion of over eight crore MGNREGA workers in the past two years – some are from PVTGs – has led to their ineligibility to register for the scheme. Additionally, numerous beneficiaries have reported cases of someone else registering with their jobcards, further exacerbating the issue.

A notable aspect of the mobile app provided for registration is the pre-populated list of villages. However, we found discrepancies in the number of villages populated in the app and MGNREGA jobcards, leading to confusion among beneficiaries and officials. For instance, the app's dropdown has 22 villages while the MGNREGA Management Information System (MIS) has 31 villages for 'Vanjari' Panchayat in Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district in Andhra Pradesh.

The app requires the names of the family members as in Aadhaar but does not provide guidance on what name should be provided in the absence of Aadhaar. Moreover, the app does not capture any explicit information about PVTGs, including in the social category field which has a default 'ST' [Scheduled Tribe] option. This results in non-PVTGs registrations as well. These ineligible registrations have prompted local officials asking PVTGs to submit certification from *sarpanches*/*mukhiyas* in some areas. In villages where PVTGs and non-PVTGs coexist, we have come across instances of non-PVTG *sarpanches*/*mukhiyas* acting against the interests of PVTGs in providing certification. We also discovered that the geo-tagging option is causing chaos due to network issues.

The app prompts the enumerator to choose from three options – Cooperative Bank; Commercial Bank, or Regional Rural Bank. Upon selection, a dropdown list of banks corresponding to the chosen category appears. For example, selecting 'Commercial Bank' presents over 300 options. Additionally, upon choosing a specific option, such as 'State Bank of India', for registration in Andhra Pradesh, the dropdown shows over 500 options for its branches. This cumbersome process introduces unnecessary complexity for both PVTGs and officials.

Leaving out a key bank

Despite the Government of India's initiative to establish an India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to improve banking services, especially in areas with limited banking infrastructure, the app does not include the IPPB in the list of banks. This omission is puzzling, since the Union Government has repeatedly emphasised the role of IPPB in facilitating financial inclusion.

Streamlining the registration process, updating the mobile app, and incorporating the IPPB as an option are essential steps to facilitate a greater participation of PVTGs in the scheme. Proactive measures to reinstate deleted jobcards and also community engagement initiatives such as involving *gram sabhas*, can improve the effectiveness of the scheme.

Despite numerous initiatives aimed at addressing their vulnerabilities, the narrative of PVTGs in independent India persistently echoes the words of Adivasi rights activist B.D. Sharma, who described the plight of Adivasis as an "unbroken history of broken promises". If set right, the PM JANMAN presents yet another opportunity to transform the lives of PVTGs, albeit a small step, in enabling them to access the benefits from India's growth story.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Irremissible

Ensuring the safety of people against fire hazards in public utilities is the sole responsibility of government officials who have the remit to its oversight, control and prevention. The catastrophic fire, in 1997, at the Uphaar theatre in Delhi was due to the gross dereliction of duty by the fire department and supervising municipal officials. The Rajkot incident is similar. Apportioning the entire blame on the owners has been the routine. In doing so, the supervisory authority never gets pulled up, only to lead to another tragedy waiting to happen. If games are played unfairly, the umpire is the cause.

R. Narayanan,
Navi Mumbai

The fire accident pricks the conscience of every person who seeks human well-being. It is quite vacuous to be shedding crocodile tears after every mishap, which often happens due to the nonchalant attitude of the officials concerned.

Prabhakaran Vallath,
Vatakara, Kozhikode, Kerala

Urban apathy

Urban Indians choosing to stay away from voting has been aptly termed as urban apathy. In a democratic polity, our lawmakers are often seen to fail in their duty towards the well-being of citizens. Urban India seems to forget that even a single vote makes a lot of difference.

Prabhu Raj R.,
Bengaluru

The great significance of the ICC's step

Priya Pillai
is an international lawyer

On May 20, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim Khan, made public his application to a pre-trial chamber of the ICC to issue arrest warrants against five individuals linked to the conflict in Gaza. The five are Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and three Hamas leaders, including Yahya Sinwar, the leader of the outfit. The announcement caused a furore, which could have possible adverse consequences for the ICC. But in all the bluster and fury, it is important to ask what the legal basis for this request is, and the implications.

The ICC was established by the Rome Statute, a treaty negotiated more than 20 years ago, to ensure legal redress for grave international crimes, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The ICC builds on the legal legacies and jurisprudence of international courts before it, including the ad hoc United Nations tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, in order to address individual criminal responsibility. It is not a determination of culpability of a nation or group, but rather of individuals.

The nature of crimes

The Prosecutor alleges in his statement that Hamas officials are responsible for an array of war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder, extermination, taking hostages, rape and sexual violence, torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, and other inhumane acts. These are allegations that stem from Hamas' attacks against Israel on October 7, 2023. The Prosecutor's case against the Israeli officials are that since October 8, 2023, they bear responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity such as persecution, extermination and/or murder including deaths caused by starvation, starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health, wilfully killing, intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population, and other inhumane acts. These applications for warrants are supported by an independent panel of experts.

Based on the Rome Statute and the procedures of the ICC, the judges of the pre-trial chamber must now make a decision regarding whether to issue the arrest warrants requested. This determination is based on the evidence that the Prosecutor submits to the judges. To issue the warrants, the judges must be satisfied that there are "reasonable grounds to believe" that the individuals have committed a crime, within the jurisdiction of the court.

An argument against the Prosecutor's actions is that Israel is not a state party to the Rome Statute and so the ICC cannot exercise jurisdiction over it. This is incorrect. There are other situations where the ICC has exercised jurisdiction over a non-state party. For instance, in Bangladesh/Myanmar, the court held that even though Myanmar is not a state party, the court has jurisdiction by virtue of particular crimes committed on the territory of a state party (Bangladesh). Another example is the arrest warrant issued against President Vladimir Putin, when Russia is not a state party. According to the ICC statute, the court has jurisdiction over crimes committed in the territory of a state party or a state which has accepted its jurisdiction, and Ukraine falls under this category. The court asserted jurisdiction which would apply to occupied and annexed territories. It is worth noting that this decision was met with acclaim by many states in the West, in contrast to the current situation regarding Israel.

Specifically addressing the jurisdiction of the court in this instance, a pre-trial chamber in 2021 affirmed that the ICC can exercise criminal jurisdiction in the Situation in the State of Palestine, and that this scope includes Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. This would include any actions on and since October 7 last year.

> The International Criminal Court has sought arrest warrants against the leadership of Israel and Hamas. This is a good step: no one should be able to commit international crimes with impunity, and accountability should not be a mere mirage

Obligation to cooperate

An immediate consequence of a positive decision on these warrants relates to obligations on all states that have ratified the Rome Statute to cooperate on matters, including arrest. When arrest warrants by the ICC were issued in relation to Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, states failed to follow through on their obligations. When Mr. Bashir was in South Africa for a summit, legal proceedings were brought to initiate the arrest in the country. However, South Africa decided not to arrest Mr. Bashir, a decision that was excoriated by the Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa as well as judges of the ICC. While this was a failure to arrest, it is worth noting that the arrest warrant hampers scope of activity and remains an obligation for over a hundred states that are a party to the Rome Statute.

It is also important to note that there are separate, distinct proceedings before another court in the Hague, the International Court of Justice (ICJ). There, South Africa is alleging violations of the Genocide Convention by Israel with regard to its actions in Gaza. The ICJ has already issued decisions indicating provisional measures, akin to injunctions in domestic law. Proceedings at the ICJ are to determine the legal responsibility of a state and are not about individual criminally responsibility.

The decision by the ICC Prosecutor is of great significance. International law is being severely tested in this crisis. While this step may not be an immediate panacea, it signals that there is value in the rule of law, in the idea that no one should be able to commit international crimes with impunity, and that accountability should not be a mere mirage.

The popularity of Dakhni

Humour, sarcasm, and bluntness have suffused the political campaign

STATE OF PLAY

Syed Mohammed
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The campaign to the Lok Sabha elections in Telangana, especially in Hyderabad, was full of quips and comebacks in the Dakhni language. Dakhni shares the Perso-Arabic script with Urdu and Farsi and is inalienable to the Deccan plateau. particularly Hyderabad. Dakhni people and speakers are spread across the plateau and speak variants of the language in Telangana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. There is evidence that Dakhni people speak the language in Kerala and Tamil Nadu as well. Though invariably mischaracterised as Hyderabadi, what Hyderabadis speak is simply a variant of Dakhni.

During the campaign, the *siyasi jalsas*, as political public meetings are called, have been filled with humour, sarcasm, and bluntness, which are all hallmarks of the Dakhni language. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Hyderabad recently, political expediency naturally led him to adopt the Dakhni lexicon. At the beginning of his speech, he said, "*Congress...Nakko, BRS...Nakko, AIMIM...Nakko*" to huge applause from the crowd. The word '*nakko*' means 'no' in Dakhni.

But the trading barbs in the language had started days before Mr. Modi's '*nakko*' reference. Asaduddin Owaisi from the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) had said as a riposte to Mr. Modi's claim of being a "brother" to Muslim women, "*Nakko re baawa, tere jaisa bhai nakko humaaku* (Oh goodness, no, we don't need a brother like you)".

The mixing of Dakhni and political rhetoric ahead of the elections also came as a nod to Dakhni poets and poetry. The poems of Mohammed Ghouse 'Khamakha', Mohammed Himayatullah, Moin Amar Bamboo, and Hari Singh were adapted for caustic, yet humorous political use. Khamakha's '*Nai Bole To Sunte Nai* (You just don't listen)' and Himayatullah's '*Kya Hai Ki Kya Nai Ki?* (What is, what isn't, who knows?)', for instance, were repurposed for the *jalsas*. Mr. Owaisi reworded a poem by Khamakha thus: '*Karne ke jo kaamaan hai/ Woh jaise ke waise hai/ Nai karne ke kaamaan karre/ Nai bole to sunte nai* (The things need doing/ remain just the way they are/ The things that you shouldn't be doing, you do/ You just don't listen)." He also reworded Hari Singh's '*Hao Re?*' to say: "*Saari janta ku haula banaara, hao re? Hindu, Musalmaan ku ladaara, hau re!* (You're making a fool of the public, eh? You're instigating Muslims and Hindus, eh!)". The words *hao* (yes) and *nakko* were used by all the parties.

With several loan words from Telugu, Kannada and Marathi, Dakhni was, and continues to be, a language of the common man since the mediaeval age. Richard M. Eaton notes that this was why the Sufis who arrived in the Deccan chose to use Dakhni as a literary medium. Some Sufis belonging to the Chishti Sufi order, and living in Bijapur in Karnataka, chose to interact with the locals, both Muslims and Hindus, in Dakhni because it was the "only vernacular of Bijapur with which both Muslims and Hindus – at least those integrated with the city – were familiar," he says. He also observes that Dakhni, as compared to Persian, which he describes as "elitist", could reach a larger number of people. To this day, private libraries of some dargahs in the Deccan contain mediaeval manuscripts and books written in Dakhni.

In 2005, Dakhni received a fillip after the comedy film, *The Angrez*, was released. The film shows the misadventures of a motley group of friends from Hyderabad who are out to exact vengeance on the *angrez* (foreigner), in this case an NRI, who has ostensibly offended them. While the movie became popular, created Dakhni stars, and spawned a genre of films, it caricatured Dakhni the language and the Dakhnis, especially in the old city of Hyderabad.

More recently, social media, especially Instagram, has been flooded with content in Dakhni. Several content creators indulge in linguistic hyperbole. Much like *The Angrez*, this too has bordered on caricaturing the language.

However, Dakhni rappers such as Pasha Bhai from Bengaluru have brought the language into the spotlight, asserting their love for the mother tongue and seeking its rightful place as a marker of identity. In Hyderabad, history and heritage enthusiasts have run campaigns seeking to distinguish Dakhni from Urdu – contrast to those who maintain that the former is a crude dialect of the latter. With Dakhni being used widely during political campaigns, it is clear that it is here to stay.

Parties choose middle-aged to older men to fight 2024 polls

Of the 8,337 candidates who are fighting the 2024 polls, around 10% (797) are women

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In the ongoing elections to the Lok Sabha, a majority of the candidates across political parties are middle-aged or older men, shows an analysis of data by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). This was seen in previous elections too.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Congress have fielded the highest number of candidates this election. While the BSP has fielded 486 candidates, the BJP has fielded 440, and the Congress 327. Of them, only 2% of the BJP's candidates, 7% of the Congress's candidates, and about 13% of the BSP's candidates are aged 25-35 years.

Also, only 16% of the BJP's candidates, 13% of the Congress's candidates, and 8% of the BSP's candidates are women. Overall, including all the political parties and independents, of the 8,337 candidates who are fighting the elections, about 10% (797) are women. **Chart 1** shows the party-wise number of female candidates and the share of women in the total number of candidates fielded. Only select parties based on their past winning performances have been depicted. The circles correspond to parties. The bigger the circle, the the higher the number of total candidates fielded.

While no party has fielded more than 40% women candidates, some have come close or even exceeded the 33.3% mark, which the Women's Reservation Bill promises. The Samajwadi Party (with 20% of its candidates being women), the All India Trinamool Congress (25%), the Biju Janata Dal, (33.3%) and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (29%) stand out among the parties which have fielded a considerable number of candidates. The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (3%) and the Communist Party of India (7%) are among the parties which have fielded a considerable number of candidates. The share of women is relatively low among them, however.

According to ADR data, none of the parties have fielded a third-gender candidate. Among independents, just two candidates – Sunaina Kinnar from Dhanbad and Durga Mousi from Damoh – were recorded as third-gender candidates fighting this election.

Chart 2 shows the party-wise number of total candidates and the share of those aged 25-35 among them in percentage. The fact that almost two-thirds of the chart from the top is vacant shows that young candidates are few and far between. However, some parties have relied on younger candidates quite heavily this election; a closer look shows an interesting pattern. Parties such as the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen, the Rashtriya Samaj Paksha, the Bharat Adivasi Party, the Republican Party of India (Athawale), and the Revolutionary Socialist Party have given a relatively high share of tickets to the youth.

All these parties have fielded these candidates in places far away from their sphere of influence. For instance, the VCK, which stands a good chance of winning two seats in Tamil Nadu, has fielded its leader, Thol Thirumaavalavan, and D. Ravikumar – both aged above 60 – in those seats. The average age of its candidates in the 11 other seats in other States, where its winning chances are extremely poor, sharply drops to 40.

Chart 3 and **Chart 4** show the share of candidates aged 35-55 and above 55, respectively. About 55% of the BJP's candidates are above 55 years of age, while the figure for the Congress is 47%. In the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, 71% are aged above 55, in the Shiromani Akali Dal, 69% are aged above 55, and in the Janata Dal (United), the figure is 75%.

Preneet Kaur, the oldest female candidate from the BJP, holds a roadshow in Patiala. PTI

A country for older men

The data were sourced from the Association for Democratic Reforms. All horizontal axes are in log scale

Chart 1: Party-wise number of female candidates and the share of women in the total number of candidates

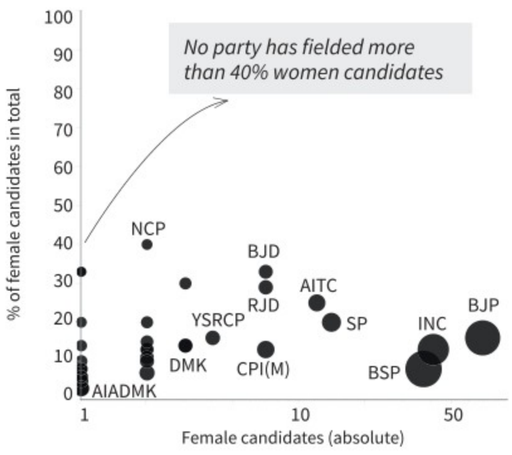


Chart 2: Party-wise number of total candidates and the share of those aged 25-35 among them in percentage

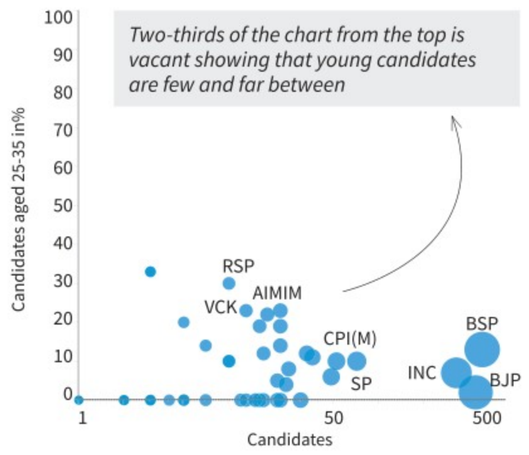


Chart 3: Party-wise number of total candidates and the share of those aged 36-55 among them in percentage

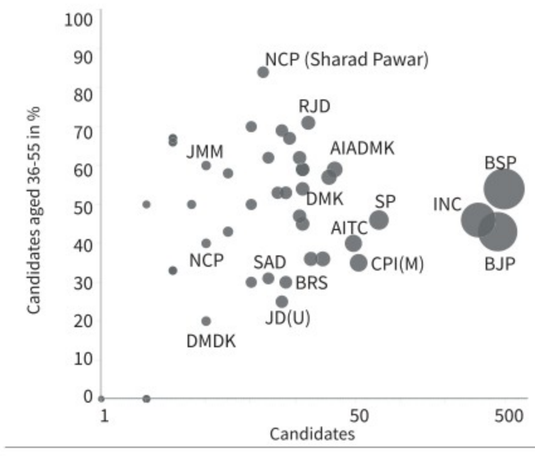
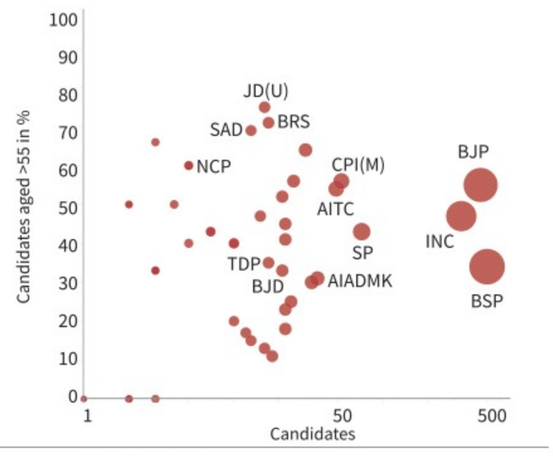


Chart 4: Party-wise number of total candidates and the share of those aged >55 among them in percentage



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 27, 1974

IAEA inspection of Indian atomic plants

New York, May 26: Sources close to the International Atomic Energy Agency at Vienna have said that India has always been 'absolutely correct' with inspectors visiting the parts of its nuclear operation that are subject to international inspection.

At the same time these sources, quoted by "The New York Times" in a Vienna dispatch, allege that India has divided some plants – one half open to inspection, and another half closed to visitors.

The transfer agreement with Canada provides for an inspection system but it specifically excludes outside controls on materials from within India. This exclusion left the Indians free to use their own supply of uranium.

According to the Agency sources, India does have some reactor installations that are subject to inspection under safeguard agreements covering transfer of material for them from the United States and Canada but it has also others that are off limits. They say that the Canadian-supplied thermal reactor in Trombay is included among the latter and the source of plutonium used in the May 18 explosion by India came from this.

The International Atomic Energy Commission is an autonomous inter-governmental organisation reporting to the United Nations.

While the Agency officially denied it had any advance proof that India was about to detonate a nuclear device, sources close to the Agency are quoted by "The New York Times" as saying its officials had been convinced for some time that India was preparing to set off a nuclear explosion "but were powerless to do anything about it". This was because India was not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and the plutonium used in the recent explosion was "produced in a reactor that is off limits for inspection."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 27, 1924

Coonoor

Coonoor, May 25: The station will have the honour of welcoming for the first time His Excellency Lord Geschen and Lady Geschen here on 28th instant. The visit is of importance as it is reported that the Government were not satisfied with the Jam Factory on account of its loss last year.

From Page One

Seven babies killed in Delhi hospital fire

Shortly afterwards, the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) also reached the spot with nine fire tenders. DFS chief Atul Garg told *The Hindu* that the fire spread to an adjacent boutique, the indoors and rooftop of a bank next to the hospital, an optical shop, an ambulance, and a scooter near the building before it could be put out. Jyotjeet Sabarwal, who heads the disaster management wing of the Bhagat Singh Sewa Dal, an NGO, told *The Hindu* that while the DFS was instrumental in controlling the fire, the rescue was led and carried out by local residents.

"We climbed up a ladder and broke the glass of the first floor of the building, where all 12 newborn babies were kept. When we broke in, we saw that everything around the children had caught fire – their clothes, diapers and the cot-like units where each baby was kept," he said. While all 12 children were rescued, the seven babies who were placed in the cots closer to the front of the building were completely charred, he added.

A medical officer working in the East Delhi Advance NICU Hospital told *The Hindu* that the newborn babies were rushed from the blazing hospital. "While six of them were declared brought dead, two were put on a ventilator, out of which one passed away on Sunday," the officer added. The medical officer said that the hospital usually treated premature babies or those who had incurred some infection, so the babies were already in a feeble condition.

Sitara Khatun, whose baby died in the fire, told *The Hindu* that he was supposed to have been released by the hospital on Sunday morning. "When my husband visited my child on Saturday, the doctor told him that he was doing fine and that they would release him on Sunday morning. I wish he had brought him back on Saturday, then I wouldn't have to live to see this," she said.

Rajkot inferno toll climbs to 33

"This game zone came up four years ago. Why no authority or official was bothered to check whether it had the necessary compliances?" an angry Rajkot resident asked. "The unfortunate incident is a result of the BJP government's utter failure to enforce the laws due to corruption from top to bottom in the State administration," said Gujarat Congress chief Shaktisinh Gohil.

The police have lodged an FIR against six people, and two have been arrested. "We have registered the FIR against six people under IPC Sections 304, 308, 336, 338, 114, out of which two people have been arrested. The crime branch team is working to arrest others. Our effort is to complete the investigation as soon as possible and file a charge sheet in the case," Rajkot Police Commissioner Raju Bhargava said. The FIR says that the operators of the amusement park had not applied for the fire NOC or 'no objection certificate', nor did they have any proper fire safety mechanisms in place.

The Gujarat High Court took *suo motu* cognisance of the tragedy on Sunday, calling it *prima facie* a "man-made disaster". The court will hear the issue on Monday, May 27.

Remal makes landfall; one lakh evacuated

Kolkata and adjoining areas received heavy rainfall and gusty winds. Gale winds with speeds of 80 kmph to 100 kmph hit the coastal areas of Digha; Haldia in East Medinipur; and Sagar, Fraserganj, Dhamakhali, Kakdwip and other coastal areas of South 24 Parganas.

Issuing a red alert cyclone warning for the State coastline, the India Meteorological Department said Remal will have a maximum sustained wind speed of 110-120 kmph, gusting to 135 kmph.

A red alert for heavy (7-11 cm) to very heavy rain (12-20 cm) was issued for a few places over North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, East Midnapore, Kolkata, Howrah and Hooghly districts.

Extremely heavy rain (over 20 cm) at one or two places is very likely over North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore districts.

A red alert has been issued for fishermen, advising them not to venture into the sea till Monday.

Kerala seeks fresh terms of reference for new dam

The Standing Committee of the Board cleared Kerala's application for conducting it on December 3, 2014. The top court had rejected an interlocutory application of Tamil Nadu seeking to restrain Kerala from conducting the EIA and to revoke the December 3 order of the Board on April 13, 2016, the Kerala government would point out before the EAC.

The State will also argue that the circumstances in which the earlier terms were sanctioned remain unchanged and hence new ones shall be allowed for another five years, sources privy to the developments said. It will also canvass for new terms, which, according to Kerala, is intended to find a permanent solution to the threat to the life and property of thousands of people residing downstream of the Mullaperiyar dam.

Wary Jharkhand labourers return home from Manipur

Labourers are returning *en masse* out of fear after one person was killed and two were injured in an attack; this is the first attack on non-locals reported since the ethnic conflict began in the State

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Standing strong: A village volunteer stands guard at a bunker set up in conflict-hit Manipur. PTI

Labourers from Jharkhand, most of them Adivasis, who had left their home towns to work in conflict-ridden Manipur earlier this year for a better life have now started returning *en masse* after one of them was shot dead, while two were injured by armed miscreants in Imphal last week.

This is the first such attack on non-locals in Manipur reported since the ethnic conflict in the State began. Such targeting of non-locals has been among the reasons cited by the Union government to routinely extend the ban on seven valley-based Meitei extremist groups in the State.

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh had in 2022 presented data to the Assembly saying 20 non-locals had been killed by militants from 2017 to mid-2022.

Another non-local, from Assam, was shot in the leg in Thoubal district on Saturday over allegations of rape against a co-worker with the police registering cases for both alleged rape and shooting.

Shriram Hansda, 42, was killed in the attack by armed miscreants on May 18. Two other labourers were injured in the attack and taken to a hospital in Imphal. Shriram, an Adivasi from Godda district's Bisaha village, is survived by his wife and four children.

His nephew, Pradeep Hansda, said a water supply company in Imphal had in January hired his uncle and others from Godda district for pipe-laying work. "We knew some people who had been working there. They said they were getting threats but also insisted on continuing to work there because the [pay] rates were very high," Mr. Pradeep said.

Robin, one of Shriram's colleagues, said, "Around 15 to 20 of us had got work there earlier this year. But after this incident, all of us have returned. I am just going to Imphal to see the injured workers," Mr. Robin said.

According to district officials in Godda, on May 18, some men knocked at the door of the rented house the labourers were living in, saying their car had broken down. Shriram and two others had gone out to help them and suddenly were faced with bullets being fired at them, those in touch with the family in Godda said. The Manipur Police said they have arrested Sairom Birjit Singh for Shriram's murder and are conducting further raids. Mr. Singh is a member of the Kangleipak Communist Party, one of the Meitei extremist groups that has been routinely banned by the government.

Uncertain future

"There is not much regular work in the village anyway... While working in Manipur, Shriram was able to send at least ₹18,000 to ₹19,000 home every month," Mr. Pradeep said. He said Shriram's wife Pooja was now staring at an uncertain future.

The Godda District Collector said officials had reached out to Shriram's family to help them.

"Some officials who visited our home and collected documents like Aadhaar did say that we might get some benefits from the governments. So far, we have not received anything," Mr. Pradeep said.

Godda is among the Lok Sabha seats in Jharkhand that are going to the polls on June 1.

Tenure of Army chief General Manoj Pande extended by a month

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

General Manoj Pande

In the first such instance, the Indira Gandhi govt. had extended the tenure of then Army chief General G.G. Bewoor by one year in 1975

In an unusual move, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Sunday extended the tenure of the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Manoj Pande, by one month. He was to retire on May 31 on turning 62.

Normally, for service chiefs, the term of office is until the age of 62 or three years, whichever is earlier.

There is only one instance in the past, when in 1975, the then Army chief, General G.G. Bewoor, was given a one-year extension by the Indira Gandhi government. The next in line as per seniority then was Lieutenant-General Prem Bhagat, who retired from service after a few months. General Bewoor served as the Army chief from January 16, 1973 to May 31, 1975, and was succeeded by General T. N. Raina.

The Cabinet Committee on Sunday approved the extension in service of General Pande up to June 30 under Rule 16 A (4) of the Army Rules 1954, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

General Pande was appointed the COAS on April 30, 2022. He was commissioned into the Army in December 1982 in the Corps of Engineers (The Bombay Sappers).

The current Vice-Chief of the Army Staff, Lieutenant-General Upendra Dwivedi, is the next in line for the top post based on the principle of seniority.

He was commissioned into 18 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles in 1984, a unit he later commanded.

The senior-most after him is Lieutenant-General Ajay Kumar Singh, currently the Southern Army Commander.

He was commissioned into 7/11 Gorkha Rifles in December 1984.

Block international spoofed calls, Centre directs telecom firms

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The government has directed telecom operators to block all incoming international spoofed calls that display Indian mobile numbers, an official statement said on Sunday.

It has been reported that fraudsters were making international spoofed calls displaying Indian mobile numbers to Indian citizens and committing cybercrime and financial frauds, the Department of Telecom (DoT) said. Such calls appeared to be originating within India but were being made by cybercriminals from abroad by manipulating the calling line identity, and had been misused in recent cases of fake digital arrests, 'FedEx scams', false claims of drugs or narcotics in courier, impersonations as government and police officials, disconnections of mobile numbers by DoT or Telecom Regulatory Authority of India officials, and so on. "DoT and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have devised a system to identify and block such international spoofed calls from reaching any Indian telecom subscriber. Now directions have been issued to the TSPs for blocking such incoming international spoofed calls," the statement said.

Incoming international spoofed calls with Indian landline numbers were already being blocked by the TSPs, according to the directions issued by the DoT.

"Despite best efforts, there may still be some fraudsters who succeed through other means. For such calls, you can help everybody by reporting such suspected fraud communications at the Chakshu facility on Sanchar Saathi," the statement said.

India records trade deficit with 9 of top 10 trading partners in 2023-24

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India has recorded a trade deficit, the difference between imports and exports, with nine of its top 10 trading partners, including China, Russia, Singapore, and Korea, in 2023-24, according to official data.

The data also showed that the deficit with China, Russia, Korea, and Hong Kong increased in the last fiscal compared to 2022-23, while the trade gap with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Indonesia, and Iraq narrowed.

The trade deficit with China rose to $85 billion, Russia to $57.2 billion, Korea to $14.71 billion and Hong Kong to $12.2 billion in 2023-24 against $83.2 billion, $43 billion, $14.57 billion and $8.38 billion, respectively, in 2022-23.

China has emerged as India's largest trading partner with $118.4 billion of two-way commerce in 2023-24, edging past the U.S.

One-way street
The table shows India's trade deficit/surplus in the financial year 2023-24, with the country's top 10 trading partners. Except the U.S., India has a trade deficit with all other partners

Country	Trade balance in $ million
China	-85,087
Russia	-57,170
Iraq	-26,650
Saudi Arabia	-20,244
Indonesia	-17,422
South Korea	-14,719
UAE	-12,393
Hong Kong	-12,206
Singapore	-6,787
U.S.	36,742

The bilateral trade between India and the U.S. stood at $118.28 billion in 2023-24. Washington was the top trading partner of New Delhi during 2021-22 and 2022-23. India has a free trade agreement with four of its top trading partners – Singapore, the UAE, Korea and Indonesia (as part of the Asian bloc). India has a trade surplus of $36.74 billion with the U.S. in 2023-24. America is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus. The surplus is also there with the U.K., Belgium, Italy, France and Bangladesh. India's total trade deficit in the last fiscal narrowed to $238.3 billion as against $264.9 billion in the previous fiscal.

According to trade experts, a deficit is not always bad, if a country is importing raw materials. However, it puts pressure on the domestic currency.

"A rising trade deficit can cause the country's currency to depreciate because more foreign currency is needed for imports. This depreciation makes imports more expensive, worsening the deficit," Economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

12 pilgrims dead as truck overturns on bus in U.P.

Press Trust of India
SHAHJAHANPUR

Twelve people headed to the Purnagiri temple in Uttarakhand were killed when a dumper truck overturned on their bus in Shahjahanpur district, the police said on Sunday. Nine pilgrims were seriously injured and were admitted to the Government Medical College here, a senior official said.

Shahjahanpur Superintendent of Police Ashok Kumar Meena said the accident took place when the bus carrying 59 passengers from Sitapur had halted at a roadside eatery. The truck carrying gravel lost control and fell on the bus, unloading the content on the pilgrims, he said.

Mainstream film industry had nothing to do with Kapadia's win: Resul Pookutty

The Hindu Bureau

Payal Kapadia at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday after winning the Grand Prix award for her film *All We Imagine as Light*. AP

Academy Award-winning sound designer Resul Pookutty on Sunday said the mainstream film industry had nothing to do with the achievement of director Payal Kapadia, who won the Grand Prix award at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival for her film *All We Imagine as Light*.

Mr. Pookutty, in a Facebook post, talked about the role of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in nurturing talent such as Ms. Kapadia. He emphasised that Ms. Kapadia's win was not just a personal victory but also a testament to the resilience and dedication of the FTII alumni.

Mr. Pookutty pointed to the lack of support from the mainstream Indian film industry and government delegations typically sent to Cannes.

"The only reason they won is also not because we had inspiring teachers, there were some but not all. The only reason for this National glory is all the inspiring films we saw at FTII and the atmosphere of that place nurtured by all the brilliant artists from all across the globe who visited there and left their energies," he said.

"Many more Payals and Chidanands, Sathosh Sivans and Shaji Karuns are going to come out. Inspire them, and let them show us a mirror that reflects us as a true society where original, logical and scientific temperament is celebrated. Let us create Sovereign minds, that will be a true celebration of cinema and life," he wrote.

Mr. Pookutty ended his note mentioning the court case that was filed by the FTII against Ms. Kapadia. She faces a court hearing next month stemming from her involvement in the 2015 FTII protests against the appointment of Gajendra Chauhan as Chairman. Ms. Kapadia was at the forefront of a historic 139-day protest opposing Mr. Chauhan's appointment due to his perceived lack of qualifications.

The protest led to severe repercussions for Mr. Kapadia, including the revocation of her scholarship and an FIR being filed against her.

Three miners feared dead in rathole mine in Assam

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Three miners, one of them from Bhojpur in Nepal, were feared dead inside an illegal rathole coal mine after a landslide struck the Patkai Hills in eastern Assam's Tinsukia district around midnight on Saturday.

"We received a report that three workers are missing from the area. Necessary action is being taken," Tinsukia District Commissioner Swapnil Paul said.

Police and officials of the North Eastern Coalfields, who reached the spot, said that efforts were under way to rescue the trapped miners if they were alive or to retrieve their bodies.

Kerala seeks fresh terms of reference for new dam

The Standing Committee of the Board cleared Kerala's application for conducting it on December 3, 2014. The top court had rejected an interlocutory application of Tamil Nadu seeking to restrain Kerala from conducting the EIA and to revoke the December 3 order of the Board on April 13, 2016, the Kerala government would point out before the EAC.

The State will also argue that the circumstances in which the earlier terms were sanctioned remain unchanged and hence new ones shall be allowed for another five years, sources privy to the developments said. It will also canvass for new terms, which, according to Kerala, is intended to find a permanent solution to the threat to the life and property of thousands of people residing downstream of the Mullaperiyar dam.

ELECTIONS 2024

Kejriwal calls for defeat of 'arrogant' BJP

Aam Aadmi Party convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday hit out at the BJP, saying the party's leaders were full of arrogance. He urged people to defeat the "arrogant BJP".

At a meet with traders in Ferozepur, he said, "... while the God has created the whole universe, the BJP people have now started thinking that [Narendra] Modi *ji* has created the universe. Therefore, it is very important for the country to defeat the arrogant BJP."

"If Modi wins the election this time, he will change the Constitution. He will end the electoral system and will end the reservation given to backward and SC/STs by the Constitution. Therefore, in this election, we have to end dictatorship by any means," the Delhi Chief Minister said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at a roadshow in Hoshiarpur on Sunday. ANI

BJP candidate arrested for 'damaging' EVM

A BJP candidate was arrested in Odisha's Khurda district for allegedly vandalising an EVM as he had to wait in queue for a long time to cast his vote because the machine malfunctioned, officials said on Sunday.

Prashant Jagdev, MLA for Chilika, has been fielded this time from the Khurda Assembly constituency. The incident happened on Saturday.

Superintendent of Police Avinash Kumar said the MLA was arrested on a complaint by the presiding officer. The officer alleged that the MLA created a disturbance at the booth, obstructed the voting process and abused polling personnel, Mr. Kumar said.

"We have requested the District Election Officer to check the CCTV footage of the incident," he said. PTI

> They [Opposition] deprived you of development work and allowed gangsters to take control over resources here
>
> **YOGI ADITYANATH**
> Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister

Modi has lost self-confidence, claims Akhilesh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lost self-confidence and has been faltering in speeches on realising that the BJP will not retain power, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said on Sunday. "The country's 140 crore people will make the BJP yearn for even 140 seats," he said. PTI

> He [PM] makes big claims that the economy is growing at a rapid pace. I want to ask if it is growing so fast then... why is there no progress in people's lives
>
> **PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA**
> Congress leader

Campaign trail: Kangana Ranaut, the BJP candidate for Mandi, during a campaign roadshow for the Lok Sabha election at Bhuntar on Saturday. PTI

With Assembly bypolls, it's a new template in Himachal

Vikas Vasudeva
SHIMLA

With Himachal Pradesh gearing up for the Lok Sabha election, the stakes for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which won all four seats in 2014 and 2019, are even higher as the task appears to be daunting amid simultaneous byelections to six Assembly seats.

The elections are poised to be a direct fight between the BJP and the Congress.

The Congress-ruled State saw political turbulence in February, with six of its MLAs turning rebels. The rebels are now contesting as BJP candidates in the byelections necessitated by their disqualification from the Assembly for defying a party whip. For the Congress, the Lok Sabha election is a fight to boost its electoral prospects nationally. A win in the byelections is critical for the survival and stability of the State government.

As an intense campaign gains momentum for the June 1 elections, the BJP appears to be leaving nothing to chance in the home State of its national president, J.P. Nadda. The party swept all four Lok Sabha seats – Shimla, Kangra, Hamirpur, and Mandi – in 2019 with a vote share of over 69%. The victory came on the back of a turnout of over 70%, the highest ever in the State.

The Congress campaign is led by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who is seeking votes on the performance of its year-and-a-half-old government and aggressively attacking the BJP for its alleged attempt to destabilise and topple the democratically elected Congress government in the State, besides the Centre's indifferent attitude towards Himachal Pradesh.

Countering the BJP's charges over unkept promises, the Congress has been saying that immediately after coming to power, its government started to deliver on its poll guarantee. It is highlighting the restoration of the old pension scheme, benefiting 1.36 lakh government employees; the Rajiv Gandhi start-up scheme for generating employment; announcement of monthly financial assistance of ₹1,500 to women in the 18-60 age group; and stern action against corruption as key accomplishments.

To garner support, the BJP leaders, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are showcasing the dilution of Article 370 and the construction of Ram Mandir, besides building a narrative around nationalism with the promise of a "strong and resilient" government. The party has been highlighting its pledge for a Uniform Civil Code.

Apart from the party's achievements, the BJP is alleging "failure" of the Congress government in the State to fulfil its election guarantees.

The key candidates for Lok Sabha seats include the BJP's actor-turned-politician Kangana Ranaut, who is locked in a keen battle against the Congress's Vikramaditya Singh, son of the late Virbhadra Singh, former Chief Minister, in Mandi. Former Union Minister Anand Sharma is the Congress candidate from Kangra, pitted against Rajeev Bhardwaj of the BJP.

Union Minister Anurag Thakur is facing the Satpal Raizada of the Congress in Hamirpur. The Congress has pitted its Kasauli MLA Vinod Sultanpuri from Shimla against the BJP's Suresh Kashyap, MP.

As polls reach Purvanchal, slings and arrows fly thick and fast

13 constituencies are going to the polls in last phase; while BJP says the Opposition is planning to bring in religion-based quotas, Samajwadi Party pushes for OBC, Dalit unity in social justice pitch; Modi vows to change the image of eastern U.P.

OVERVIEW

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Varanasi is among the 13 constituencies in Uttar Pradesh going to the polls in the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha election.

As campaigning heats up in the political battleground of Purvanchal, or eastern Uttar Pradesh, top leaders are not hesitating to bring controversial issues to the forefront.

Mr. Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath led the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's offensive, alleging that the Opposition INDIA alliance is appealing for "vote jihad".

They alleged that the Opposition wanted to rewrite the Constitution to provide reservation based on religion, and to turn the country's majority community into second-class citizens.

Apart from Varanasi, the constituencies going to the polls on June 1 are Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushi Nagar, Deoria, Bansgaon, Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Mirzapur, and Robertsganj.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the BJP and its ally Apna Dal won 11 of these seats, while the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which was then in alliance with the Samajwadi Party (SP), won two.

Battle lines drawn: Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Mirzapur, and, right, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav during an election rally in support of the party candidate from Ballia, Sanatan Pandey, on Sunday. ANI

Key contests

In the 2024 election, Pankaj Chaudhary of the BJP is facing Virendra Chaudhary from the Congress in Maharajganj.

In the prestigious Gorakhpur constituency, once synonymous with Mr. Adityanath, BJP MP Ravi Kishan is taking on SP candidate Kajal Nishad.

The Nishad community, which is in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, has a sizeable presence in the constituency, and the SP is trying to repeat its success in the 2018 bypoll, when its Nishad candidate Praveen Kumar Nishad had emerged victorious against the BJP's Upendra Dutt Shukla. The SP has been pitching aggressively in the region for a caste census, pushing for a broader unity of OBC and Dalit social groups.

The prestigious constituency of Varanasi will witness Ajay Rai of the Congress challenging Mr. Modi again. In 2019, the Prime Minister emerged victorious by over 4,78,000 votes, defeating Shalini Yadav of the SP, while Mr. Rai came third.

In Ballia, once associated with former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, the BJP has fielded his son Neeraj Shekhar to take on Sanatan Pandey of the SP. In 2019, Mr. Pandey lost by just 15,000-odd votes.

In Ghazipur, another key eastern Uttar Pradesh constituency which has a long history of social conflict, BSP MP Afzal Ansari is contesting on SP ticket against Paras Nath Rai of the BJP and Umesh Singh of the BSP.

PM's campaign

In his campaign, Mr. Modi said that the BJP would change the image of Purvanchal, adding that the dream of *Viksit* Bharat would be fulfilled through eastern Uttar Pradesh.

He alleged that Opposition parties remained silent when their South Indian allies abused and humiliated the people of Uttar Pradesh.

"Purvanchal is the growth engine of not only U.P. but also of entire India. Phenomenal work is done in the past decade but more work will be done which will change the picture of the region completely," the Prime Minister added.

The Opposition parties pushed a social justice pitch, claiming that the BJP would be defeated across the region. "We are going to completely wipe out the BJP from Purvanchal. The way the PDA (Backwards, Dalits and Minorities) family is supporting, it seems that the INDIA alliance is going to win all seats in the remaining phase," SP president Akhilesh Yadav, said ridiculing the "400 *paar*" slogan of the BJP.

"I can say with confidence that they will fail to cross 140 seats," said Mr. Yadav.

BJP attacking roots of our democracy, says Rahul

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

With less than a week left for the final phase of the Lok Sabha election, the campaign has hit top gear in Himachal Pradesh as key leaders have been making a beeline for the hill State.

The State will go to the polls on June 1.

On Sunday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said that in the Lok Sabha election, the fight was not just about electing an MP or forming a government, but rather a struggle to save the country's democracy.

Alleging that the Bharatiya Janata Party was attacking the roots of Indian democracy, he declared that the people now had the opportunity to elect a government that would stand firm in protecting the Constitution and strengthening democracy. "Your every vote for the Congress candidates will further strengthen the foundation of the Constitution," he said at Nahan in Sirmaur district.

Mr. Gandhi accused the BJP-led Union government of not helping the people of Himachal Pradesh when a relentless monsoon brought the hill State to its knees last year, causing extensive damage to life and property.

Though the rain had affected over 22,000 families, the Union government had yet to release ₹9,000 crore worth of relief funds to the State, the Congress leader said.

Written off as spent force, Cong. claws itself back into fight

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Congress is used to political obituaries being written about it after every electoral setback since 2014, but its losses in the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan last December made even its most optimistic supporters despondent.

The party lost the Hindi heartland States in those elections that were described as the semi-finals ahead of the big final of the Lok Sabha election. The victory in Telangana was a mere consolation.

Since December, most political analysts have been quick to conclude that the Lok Sabha election would be a mere formality, and that a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi was inevitable.

"Unlike many political commentators, I cannot predict the future. What I am confident of is that this is a much closer election than what is being propagated by the media. We are going to fight an excellent election and we are going to win the election," former party president Rahul Gandhi said at the launch of his party's manifesto on April 5.

Irrespective of the final outcome, the Congress has shown a willingness to put up a strong fight by framing the 2024 battle as one between those "who want to destroy the Constitution and democracy and those who want to protect it".

The arrests of Opposition leaders by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Income Tax Department's curbs on the Congress's bank accounts were cited as examples of democracy being under threat, denying the Opposition a level playing field in the election.

The Congress used the Bharatiya Janata Party's slogan of "400 paar", its ambition for more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha, to launch a counter-offensive. It argued that once the BJP gets a tally of above 400, it will change the Constitution to end reservation for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). On its part, the Congress promised higher quotas for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) by vowing to remove the 50% cap on reservation after conducting a caste-based census.

Back in currency: Congress strategists believe that their slogan 'reservation under threat' has gained popularity. AFP

Irrespective of the final outcome, the Congress has shown a willingness to put up a strong fight

"The Census that was due in 2021 has still not been done. It has been delayed by three years. Why? It is because they want to end reservation. They don't want us to know the population of SCs and STs," Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh said at a press conference on April 25.

As the campaign progressed, Congress strategists believed that their slogan "reservation under threat" had taken roots among the people; Mr. Gandhi then started addressing his rallies with a copy of the Constitution in his hand. Such persistent attack forced the BJP to respond with its counter-allegation, that all reservations would be given only to Muslims if the Opposition INDIA bloc came to power.

'Tempo' of attack

The Congress's uncharacteristic aggression was most visible in its response to the Prime Minister's charge that Mr. Gandhi had "gone silent" and stopped abusing "Adani-Ambani" after receiving "Tempo-loads of black money" from the two businessmen. "Has Tempo [van] loads of money reached the Congress? What deal has been arrived at, that abusing Ambani-Adani has stopped overnight," Mr. Modi asked.

Hitting back at Mr. Modi, Mr. Gandhi released a video in which he asked whether receiving money in Tempo goods carriages was "a personal experience", and asserted that the Prime Minister had got "a little scared".

"Do one thing – send the CBI, ED to them and carry out a thorough investigation and don't be scared," Mr. Gandhi dared Mr. Modi in a video statement, released within hours of the Prime Minister's election speech at Telangana.

The low turnout in the first phase saw the BJP recalibrate its campaign, with an emphasis on *mangalsutra*, mutton, *machchli* and even *mujra* – all euphemisms to corner the Congress over Muslim appeasement – in the Prime Minister's speeches. Mr. Modi's allegations that the Congress was giving away Hindu wealth and caste quotas to Muslims started at Barmer, after the first murmurs were heard of the Congress and the INDIA bloc doing better than expected.

The Congress responded to each of the allegations, but stayed but within the template of its 25 guarantees, with most leaders including Mr. Gandhi sticking to the economic pitch in their speeches.

Now, as the seven-phase election enters its final phase, each side is claiming to have delivered the winning punch. Besides an aggressive campaign, electoral victories are also a matter of leSadership and a robust organisation, both areas where the BJP scores over the Congress.

So, a third term for Mr. Modi is a clear possibility; but the Opposition, which was written off only five months ago, has certainly managed to create a perception that it is still in the fight.

INBRIEF

Nadda, Shah lash out at INDIA bloc leaders at Bihar rally

BJP president J.P. Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed five election rallies in Bihar on Sunday in support of the National Democratic Alliance candidates. Mr. Shah addressed meetings in Karakat and Sasaram Lok Sabha constituencies, whereas Mr. Nadda campaigned in Ara, Jehanabad, and Nalanda. They slammed the regime of the Rashtriya Janata Dal and accused the INDIA bloc leaders of giving reservation to Muslims. Mr. Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had decided that his government would not allow the reservation for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes to be touched.

Pune accident: Cong. youth wing holds essay competition

Keeping up the pressure on Maharashtra's ruling *Mahayuti* government to ensure justice in the Pune accident case, the Congress's youth wing on Sunday organised an essay writing competition near the accident spot, where a 17-year-old, under the influence of alcohol, killed two persons while driving an unregistered Porsche. The competition was a riposte to the initial decision of the Juvenile Justice Board to grant bail to the minor less than 15 hours after the accident on May 19, asking the teenager to write a 300-word essay on road accidents in its bail order. A Youth Congress leader said the more than 100 entries would be sent to the Home Minister and the Pune Commissioner of Police.

INDIA bloc has support of 'jihadis in Pakistan': Modi

PM accuses the Samajwadi Party and the Congress of appealing for 'vote jihad' in the country, says the Opposition INDIA bloc was targeting him for speaking against reservation based on religion

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being garlanded by BJP workers at a rally in Deoria on Sunday. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said "jihadis in Pakistan" were offering prayers in support of the Opposition INDIA bloc parties in the ongoing Lok Sabha election, while accusing the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress of appealing for "vote jihad" in India.

"In Pakistan, prayers are held for the INDIA alliance of Samajwadi Party and Congress. Jihadis across the border are supporting them. The SP and the Congress are making an appeal for 'vote jihad' here," Mr. Modi said at an election rally at Deoria in the Purvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh.

The Prime Minister said the Opposition alliance was aiming at reinstating Article 370 in Kashmir, adding that he was being targeted and abused for opposing reservation on the basis of religion.

"This [INDIA bloc] group is saying that when they come to power, they will bring back Article 370 in Kashmir. Their agenda is not the development of India, rather they want to take back India by several decades," Mr. Modi said.

In Deoria, Shashank Mani Tripathi of the BJP is taking on Akhilesh Pratap Singh of the Congress.

Reservation claims

Mr. Modi further targeted the SP and the Congress on the matter of reservation for the Other Backward Classes, the Scheduled Castes, and the Scheduled Tribes, reiterating that the Opposition parties wanted to snatch the constitutionally guaranteed reservation for these social groups. "The people who drafted the Constitution said there would be no reservation based on religion. But the Congress and the SP want to snatch the reservation of Backward Classes, SCs, STs, and give it based on religion," he alleged.

"I want to bring to your notice that in 2012, the SP stated that Muslims should get reservation equal to that of Dalits. This INDIA bloc wants to change the Constitution for this. When I ask them [about reservation], they abuse Modi," the Prime Minister alleged.

Mr. Modi questioned the Opposition parties for declining the invitation to the Ram Temple consecration ceremony, adding that it showed their hatred towards Lord Ram.

"These parties [Congress and SP] rejected the invitation for the consecration ceremony. After 500 years, the dream of a grand Ram Temple is fulfilled in Ayodhya. When the people of India built such a grand temple and forgave all their [Congress] mistakes by inviting them for the consecration ceremony, these people insulted Lord Ram by rejecting the invitation," the Prime Minister said.

Will implement UCC, simultaneous polls in next term, says Shah

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Amit Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said a Uniform Civil Code for the entire country will be implemented within the next five years after extensive consultations with all stakeholders, if the BJP returns to power at the Centre.

In a wide-ranging interview with *PTI*, Mr. Shah said the Modi government, in its next term, will also implement "One Nation, One Election" as the time has come for elections to be held simultaneously in the country.

"The UCC is a responsibility left to us by the makers of our Constitution. The guiding principles decided for us by the Constituent Assembly include the Uniform Civil Code. Legal scholars like K.M. Munshi, Rajendra Babu, and Ambedkar*ji* had said that there should not be laws based on religion in a secular country," Mr. Shah said.

The UCC has been on the BJP's agenda for a long time, and recently it was enacted in the BJP-ruled Uttarakhand.

"I believe that the Uniform Civil Code is a huge social, legal, and religious reform. The law made by the Uttarakhand government should undergo social and legal scrutiny," he said.

In its manifesto for the ongoing Lok Sabha election, the BJP has said that Article 44 of the Constitution lists Uniform Civil Code as one of the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Bringing down costs

The BJP leader further said simultaneous elections would bring down costs.

Asked if it could be done within the next five years, Mr. Shah said it would be done in this period only. "Five years are a sufficient period," he said.

"The Prime Minister had formed the Ram Nath Kovind Committee. I was also a member of it. Its report has been submitted. The time has come that elections should be held simultaneously in the country," he said.

Modi insulted Bihar with his '*mujra*' remark, says Kharge

Press Trust of India
SASARAM

Mallikarjun Kharge

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his "*mujra*" remark against Opposition leaders and said that he "insulted Bihar" by making such a comment.

Mr. Kharge, during a day-long tour of Bihar where he addressed an election rally in Sasaram and addressed a congregation in Patna city, said, "Modi*ji* insulted Bihar by using this word... This is not how a PM should talk."

His reaction came after Mr. Modi vowed to thwart alleged attempts to rob Dalits and backward classes of reservation by the INDIA bloc, which he accused of being "enslaved" and performing "*mujra*" for its Muslim vote bank.

Mr. Kharge said the BJP was spreading communal hatred to divert the attention of the people from issues that matter. "Neither the PM nor other BJP leaders will talk about issues such as growing unemployment or price rise. They are dividing this country on the lines of religion and caste," he said.

He said the Election Commission must take action against those who make such hate speeches.

As stars land in Karakat, Pawan does the hero act

Amit Bhelari
KARAKAT

Bhojpuri singer and actor Pawan Singh, who had earlier refused to contest the Lok Sabha election from the Asansol seat offered by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has now made it a tough fight for BJP ally and former Union Minister Upendra Kushwaha in the Karakat Lok Sabha constituency.

Contesting as an Independent candidate, Mr. Singh is making big promises in his campaign. On May 22, the BJP expelled him from the party for contesting against Mr. Kushwaha, president of the Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) and member of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in Bihar.

With Mr. Singh's entry, the contest at Karakat in Rohtas district of Bihar has become triangular, as the Opposition alliance has fielded Rajaram Singh of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) as its candidate. Mr. Pawan Singh is banking on his own fan following, with popular faces from the Bhojpuri film industry campaigning in his support.

At a *Jan Samvad* held at Gorari village in the Karakat Assembly segment on Saturday, large numbers of people gathered to see Bhojpuri stars such as Pakhi Hegde, Manoj Tiger, and Astha Singh on the stage. More than political interaction, their campaign was a live stage show, with the stars seeking votes in favour of Mr. Pawan Singh.

Much of the audience was under voting age; youth who had come from a nearby village to take photos and videos of the stars on their mobile phones.

Caste calculus

The Karakat Lok Sabha constituency has more than three lakh Yadav voters, and another three lakh Kushwaha and Kurmi voters. Rajputs like Mr. Pawan Singh account for two lakh voters. The Vaishya community has another two lakh voters. There are one lakh Brahmin voters and 50,000 Bhumihar voters. Realising the importance of the caste factor, the Bhojpuri actors and singers performing on the stage did not hesitate to reveal their own castes, to send a message that Mr. Pawan Singh has support from all communities. When Mr. Singh came on the stage, he said that he does not do politics on the basis of caste.

Star campaigner: Bhojpuri star and Independent candidate Pawan Singh campaigning in Gorari village. PTI

The voters acknowledged that they were mostly there for the entertainment. "He is power star Pawan Singh and I am his biggest fan. However running a country and performing on the stage are different things. Voters are wise enough to take their call," said Pratik Singh, from Budhwal village.

"Like others, I have also come here to see the Bhojpuri artists because I like their songs and acting," said Upendra Yadav, a resident of Gorari village.

Though the direct contest is between Mr. Kushwaha and Mr. Rajaram Singh, who is also a Kushwaha by caste, no one can deny the presence of Mr. Pawan Singh in the constituency.

"Very few people have heard the name of this constituency before and today the entire nation is talking about it because of Pawan Singh. I have decided that once I become MP of Karakat, I will purchase land for a house and will stay here along with the people of Karakat. I have also decided that when I become MP for Karakat, I will not use the salary of an MP and will donate it for the wedding of my sisters and daughters in this constituency," Mr. Pawan Singh said, addressing an election rally in Karakat.

Tough challenge

The importance of this seat can be gauged from the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi campaigned here on Saturday, followed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday.

Asked about the tough challenge being put up by the Bhojpuri star, Mr. Kushwaha was dismissive. "I do not reply to such questions which have no meaning at all. This is a completely baseless question. However, I am more than 100% confident of winning the Karakat seat, and people of this constituency have already made up their mind," he told *The Hindu*.

In 2019, the Karakat seat was won by Janata Dal(U) candidate Mahabali Singh.

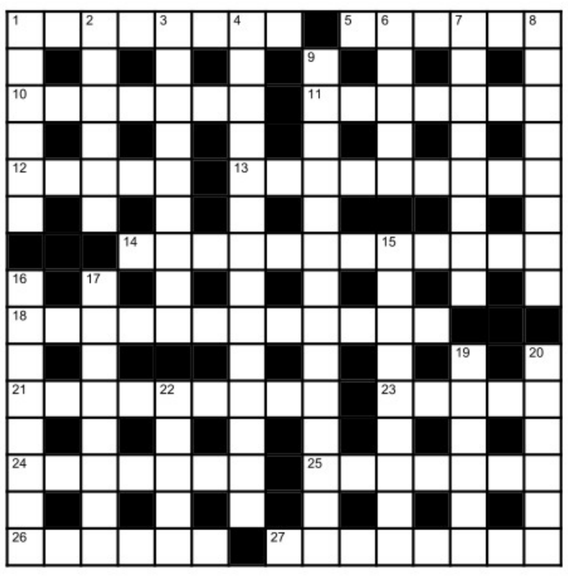
Karakat will vote in the final phase of the election on June 1.

TH CROSSWORD + 14185

(set by Dr. X)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Protest as money-grabbing politician backs gangster (8)
5 Pastel blue sheets (6)
10 Polish or Greek character enthralled by knocking back draughts (5,2)
11 Old train crashed round province in North America (7)
12 Anal disorder involving fistula at centre of the buttocks (5)
13 Finale conducted by trio in fantastic performance (9)
14 Point beyond which one can no longer survive - it's terminal! (3,2,3,4)
18 Correct! Love is fantastic for happiness (12)
21 Witticism with nice cracks about lady chasing husband in conclusion of joke (9)
23 Most hostile states (5)
24 Passion ending in marriage proposal (7)
25 Buck up a friend drinking at home on retirement (7)
26 Exhausted in conclusion, scoring cocaine and ecstasy (6)
27 Turn to cuddle miss when it's dark (8)

Down

1 Covering crime in lock-up endlessly (6)
2 Half-time over, fantastic end to tourney (6)
3 Brief programme about elegant rescue devices (9)
4 Parodies Spooner! Man, it is funny (14)
6 Weapon concealed by rebel at hideout (5)
7 Huge blunder in revolutionary outbreak by current leader of China (8)
8 Pampered nationalist in caricature by journalist (8)
9 Night we got high, drinking booze heartily with everyone collapsing (5,2,3,4)
15 Self-centred person, one involved in a con game perhaps (9)
16 Pioneers new chemical compound (8)
17 Draw small brown shed (5-3)
19 Lie back, proceed to eat ice cream (6)
20 Help to accumulate runs and declare (6)
22 Jack Daniels heartily consumed by emcee (5)

SUDOKU

			1	7	2		9	8
5	2			4	8			
						2	7	
		4	3			8		2
6								9
2		8			5	7		
	6	1						
			5	1			3	7
7	4		8	3	6			

No.SS6171 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

C	A	T	E	G	O	R	Y	
U		A		R		O		C
T	A	B	L	E	A	U		U
O		O		Y		G		T
F	L	U	S	H		H	A	T
F		R		O		A		I
			R	U	N	N	I	N
U		I		N		D		G
S	E	M	I	D	E	T	A	C
H		P				U		O
E	L	A	S	T	O	M	E	R
R		R		I		B		N
I	N	T	O	T	A	L		E
N		E		H		E		R
G	A	D	G	E	T		A	S

D		H	A	M	M	E	R	
	D		A		E			
	U	N	D	I	N	E	S	
		T		T		I		P
		H	A	T	S	O	F	F
		A		I			E	
		I	N	G	C	O	S	T
		G		H		T		E
		T	A	C	H	E	D	
		U		O		C		T
	K	U	R	D	S			
		B		N		M		U
E	M	A	N	A	T	E		
		R		T		N		
A	S	S	E	N	T	E	D	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	9	5	4	1	3	6	7	2
7	3	2	5	6	9	4	1	8
4	1	6	2	7	8	9	5	3
9	7	3	6	5	4	8	2	1
6	8	4	3	2	1	5	9	7
2	5	1	9	8	7	3	6	4
3	6	9	1	4	2	7	8	5
5	2	7	8	3	6	1	4	9
1	4	8	7	9	5	2	3	6

FAITH

Mahaperiyava, the saviour

The Omniscient's various avatars on earth occurred with the purpose to establish dharma and guide mankind on the right way to live on earth. Additionally, erudite expositions on scriptures by preceptors, saints and savants provide models for one to lead a purposeful and sin-free life. The third avenue is interacting with saints among us, enabling one to rise above base emotions while being part of the material world. One such lofty soul is Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Mahaswamigal, the 68th Pontiff of Kanchi Peetam, said Suchitra Balasubramanian.

Born as Swaminathan, in the Tamil month of Vaikasai, in Villupuram district, he mastered the holy books quickly and rose to the highest position in the Math early in life. The pressures of modern life made many turn to the Pontiff for guidance on balancing their material quest and spiritual yearnings. Mahaperiyava was an embodiment of spiritual equipoise and wisdom. From offering solace to the sick to leading by example on the need to be kind to all living things, he was unparalleled, with the result that he was looked upon as Kaliyuga saviour. A devotee once noticed red ants swarming over the Pontiff's feet and horrified at the pain he must be undergoing. He urged the Math head to squash them. The latter said, "Why kill someone who is only doing what has to be done to stay alive?"

Fair deal for elders

COVERNOTE

Health insurance terms get easier for senior citizens; getting coverage may continue to be difficult and costly, though

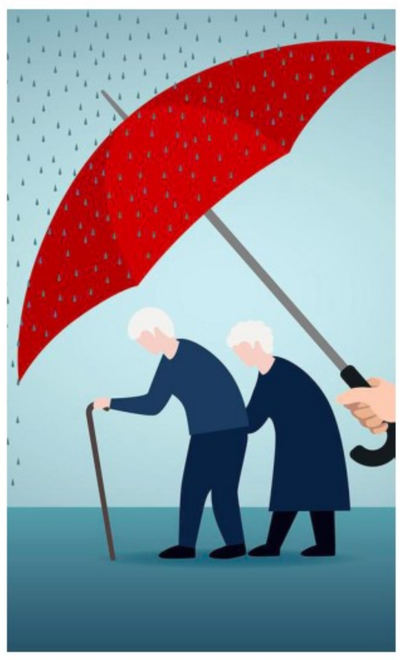
K. Nitya Kalyani

The CEO of a leading general insurance company once told me that even life insurance is optional, but everyone in the country needs a health insurance policy.

Of course, the sad thing is that we continue to talk only about the lucky 11% or so who are willing to, or can afford to buy commercial insurance.

It is a no-brainer that healthcare requirements can zoom as one ages, and so the expenses. The sad corollary is that that's when it gets more difficult to get health insurance because, in a cynical way, the insurer too is careful of his risks.

That's why we keep saying in CoverNote that you should start your insurance early. It is true for life insurance, it's true for annuities or pension plans and it's certainly true for health insurance, where you can build up your track record, work off your waiting period for different treatments, and even shore up your sum insured as you go through claim-free years. There have been some regulatory moves to make



health insurance more available to senior citizens. Under the Health Insurance Regulations, 2016, IRDAI had asked insurance companies to offer hospitalisation insurance at least up to 65 years. Companies were free to offer cover to older customers, and many did so.

Insurers wary

On the ground, however, it was not easy going to actually get a policy due to underwriting caution by the insurers. IRDAI has removed this age cap with effect from April 1, 2024. This is a theoretical benefit as the underwriting decision is still with the underwriter - the insurance company. It may open up the market and smart marketers may find ways to explore this market and introduce more products and finer underwriting. It's not going to be any easier to actually get a policy because pre-existing disease exclusions, higher premiums and stringent terms and conditions will all definitely be part of the package. But there has been relief on that front too. Just a few days before this announcement, the regulator had eased things up a bit. The waiting period for pre-existing diseases was reduced to three years, while it was at least four years in many companies.

Another measure was reducing the moratorium for rejecting any claim on the basis of non-disclosure or misrepresentation to five years from eight years. But years look like decades when you are older.

Starting your health policy at a younger age means you won't need to wait to make claims at older ages when the need is higher.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

ILLUSTRATION: SOUMYADIP SINHA

Travel cover, a must-have

A travel insurance makes sure that not only your medical expenses like hospitalisation and doctor fees are taken care of, but also the cost of emergency medical evacuation

TRIP TIP

Manas Kapoor

> There are specific plans that provide policyholders with PED coverage up to a certain limit or up to the sum insured

Planning a vacation abroad? You must have zeroed in on the destination, the budget, and may have a detailed itinerary. Understandably, vacations are all about excitement and exploring, but that doesn't mean that something won't go amiss along the way. So, among everything else, don't miss out on the one thing that has your back during your journey - your travel insurance.

Many countries have made that mandatory when you apply for a visa. But a majority of people buy travel insurance just for the sake of compliance without actually doing much research. Falling ill or losing valuables might not be on your itinerary, but it's far more common than you can imagine. In fact, in many European cities, pickpocketing and theft are highly prevalent in crowded tourist areas. Many people lose their wallets, phones and passports while traveling. Now, think of the immense financial strain such an incident can put you through. A travel insurance plan can come to your rescue in such situations.

Medical emergency

A medical emergency in a foreign country can be a nightmare. After all, you may not be familiar with the local healthcare system. Moreover, the cost of treatment can drain all your funds that you may have with you in the foreign land, and then some more. A travel insurance makes sure that not only your medical expenses like hospitalisation and doctor fees are taken care of, but also the cost of emergency medical evacuation, if needed.

Conditions like diabetes or hypertension are increasingly becoming common among all age groups which might just add to the risk. Fortunately, travel insurance policies cover the cost of treatment if the policyholder finds himself/herself in an emergency medical situation while travelling even if that situation arises due to pre-existing diseases (PEDs). Notably though, this cover is only available for life-threatening situations and will pay the medical expenses for treatment required to bring the patient out of danger and to stability. There are specific plans that provide policyholders with PED coverage up to a certain limit or up to the sum insured.

If the policyholder is suffering from any chronic disease like diabetes or high blood pressure, or if he/she has been diagnosed with any medical condition in the last 48 months, then those conditions are categorised as pre-existing diseases. Also, any ailment for which the policyholder is undergoing treatment is a PED.

These ailments are covered in health plans after the initial waiting period of up to 3 years. However, since a travel insurance is a short-duration policy, the waiting period makes no sense and hence these PEDs traditionally were excluded from the coverage.

However, now there are certain insurance plans that cover these ailments as well. These plans provide coverage without any medical tests or documents while buying policy.

However, one should really compare and understand what is the limit for the PED and whether there is any excluded diseases that are not covered by the policy.

'Disclose PEDs'

It is of paramount importance to disclose the PED to your insurer while purchasing a travel insurance policy. Many people commit this mistake and assume that nothing will go wrong during a short trip and hence do not declare the PED while purchasing a travel policy. But if the policyholder fails to do so, the claim could be outrightly rejected. This is because the insurance provider has the right to assess the risk adequately and accurately before offering a policy to the individual at a specific premium.

So while purchasing the policy, make sure you list down any ongoing medical conditions which may lead to life-threatening situations, or which may require medication or treatment on a regular basis. In these circumstances, buying a policy with PED coverage would be a good idea as well. And for that, declaring the PED is anyway a pre-requisite.

Medical condition is a critical reason to opt for travel insurance, but there is a lot more to these insurance plans.

A travel insurance policy also provides protection against trip cancellations and interruptions which may have been caused due to any of the listed reasons like an illness, a death in the family, or even airline issues.

Without a travel insurance, you may have lost the non-refundable deposits you may have made for flights, accommodations, and tours. On the other hand, the travel insurance covers you for these expenses.

It also covers you against travel-related risks such as trip delays and missed flight, and even flight cancellations.

Moreover, travel insurance also protects you against lost or stolen belongings, including luggage and passports during your trip. Being stranded in a foreign country without your belongings can be a nightmare. By opting for a comprehensive travel insurance, you ensure that you will be reimbursed for the cost of replacing these items. And you can continue your journey with minimal disruption. Some policies even offer you cash advances in case of an emergency.

(The writer is Business Head, Travel Insurance, Policybazaar.com)

Rebalance portfolio to manage risk

THINKINVESTOR

A decline in equity investments towards the end of the time horizon for a life goal will allow limited time to recover the losses; the more the equity allocation, the greater the risk

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

A major process relating to self-management of your investments is portfolio rebalancing. In this article, we explain why rebalancing is important. We also offer a simple rule to rebalance your portfolio through the time horizon for a life goal.

Managing risk

Every goal-based portfolio should have a combination of equity and bond investments. Your equity investment should be in large-cap ETFs and your bond investment in bank recurring deposits. Asset allocation refers to the proportion of equity and bond investments in your portfolio. Your equity investments will carry unrealised gains (or losses). So, the proportion of equity in the portfolio will vary very year. If unrealized gains from equity is greater than the returns on bank deposits, the equity allocation will be higher than in the previous year. This may require you to adjust the asset allocation to reduce the risk associated with equity investments. This process is called rebalancing.

You must also be mindful of your portfolio's risk as you approach the end of the time horizon for a life goal. The more the equity allocation, the greater the risk. This is because a decline in your equity investments towards the end of the time horizon for a life goal would allow limited time to recover the losses. You should cut your equity allocation as your approach the last five years of the time horizon for a life goal. This means you must sell some of your equity investments and move into bonds, another reason to rebalance your portfolio.

Conclusion

The rebalancing rule to manage risk relating to unrealised gains is simple. Suppose you expect a 12% annual pre-tax return on equity. If gains on your equity investments are greater than 12% in any year, you should take out returns above 12%. Assume you have 10 lakh in equity and your annual unrealised gain is 14%. You should redeem units worth 2% of 10 lakh and invest the amount in fixed deposits. What about rebalancing to reduce risk as your approach the end of the time horizon for a life goal? Your peak equity allocation should not be more than 70% five years before the end of the time horizon for a life goal. You must thereafter cut your equity allocation (say, 10% annually) so that you hold not more than 30% at the end of the time horizon for a life goal.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.50	7.50	7.25
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.20	8.00	7.25
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.25	6.00	6.75	6.25
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.50	7.25	7.25
NorthEast Small Finance Bank	8.50	7.75	8.00	6.25
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.65	6.85	8.60	8.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.25	7.20	7.20
Unity Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.85	8.15	8.15
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.50	7.75
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.20	6.70	7.10	7.00
Bandhan Bank	7.85	7.85	7.25	5.85
City Union Bank	7.25	7.00	6.50	6.25
CSB Bank	7.75	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	8.05	7.10	7.55	7.40
Federal Bank	7.40	6.80	7.00	6.60
HDFC Bank	7.25	6.60	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	7.20	6.70	7.00	7.00
IDFC First Bank	7.90	6.50	7.25	7.00
IndusInd Bank	7.75	7.75	7.25	7.25
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.05	7.05	6.50	6.50
Karur Vysya Bank	7.50	7.00	7.00	7.00
Karnataka Bank	7.40	7.10	6.50	6.50
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.40	7.10	7.00	6.20
RBL Bank	8.00	7.50	7.50	7.10
SBM Bank India	8.25	7.10	7.60	7.75
South Indian Bank	7.40	6.70	6.70	6.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.50
YES Bank	7.75	7.25	7.25	7.25
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	7.25	6.85	7.25	6.50
Bank of India	7.25	6.80	6.50	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	7.10	6.75	6.50	6.50
Canara Bank	7.25	6.85	6.80	6.70
Central Bank of India	7.25	6.75	6.50	6.25
Indian Bank	7.25	6.10	6.25	6.25
Indian Overseas Bank	7.30	6.90	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25	6.75	7.00	6.50
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.25	6.20	6.00	6.00
State Bank of India	7.10	6.80	6.75	6.50
Union Bank of India	7.25	6.75	6.50	6.50

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85
Bank of Baroda	9.15-10.65	9.15-10.65	9.15-10.90
Union Bank of India	8.35-10.75	8.35-10.90	8.35-10.90
Punjab National Bank	8.45-10.25	8.40-10.15	8.40-10.15
Bank of India	8.40-10.85	8.40-10.85	8.40-10.85
Canara Bank	8.50-11.25	8.45-11.25	8.40-11.15
UCO Bank	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30
Bank of Maharashtra	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00
Indian Overseas Bank	8.40-10.60	8.40-10.60	8.40-10.60
Central Bank of India	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.70*	8.70*	8.70*
ICICI Bank	8.75*	8.75*	8.75*
Axis Bank	8.75-13.30	8.75-13.30	8.75-9.65
HSBC Bank	8.50*	8.50*	8.50*
South Indian Bank	8.70-11.70	8.70-11.70	8.70-11.70
Karur Vysya Bank	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05
Karnataka Bank	8.50-10.62	8.50-10.62	8.50-10.62
Federal Bank	8.80*	8.80*	8.80*
Dhanlaxmi Bank	9.35-10.50	9.35-10.50	9.35-10.50
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.60-9.95	8.60-9.95	8.60-9.95
Bandhan Bank	9.16-15.00	9.16-13.33	9.16-13.33
RBL Bank	8.90*	8.90*	8.90*
CSB Bank	10.73-12.58	10.73-12.58	10.73-12.58
HDFC Bank Ltd.	8.75*	8.75*	8.75*
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.50-10.35	8.50-10.55	8.50-10.75
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.50*	8.50*	8.50*
Tata Capital	8.75*	8.75*	8.75*
PNB Housing Finance	8.50-14.50	8.50-14.50	8.50-11.45
GIC Housing Finance	8.80*	8.80*	8.80*
SMFG India Home Finance	10.00*	10.00*	10.00*
Aditya Birla Capital	8.60 *	8.60*	8.60*
ICICI Home Finance	9.20*	9.20*	9.20*
Godrej Housing Finance	8.55*	8.55*	8.55*

*Onwards Rates as on May 22 Source:Paisabazaar.com

TAIPEI

Taiwan's President wants to work with China despite military drills

REUTERS

Taiwan's new President Lai Ching-Te said on Sunday he was still ready to work with China, despite this week's military drills around the self-ruled island. Mr. Lai told reporters on Sunday that he wanted Taiwan and China to "jointly shoulder the important responsibility of regional stability". AFP

MOSCOW

Russia claims to have 'liberated' village in eastern Ukraine's Kharkiv

REUTERS

Russia's Defence Ministry said its forces had captured Berestove village in the northeastern Kharkiv region. Berestove is located on the eastern front line close to the Lugansk region, which is entirely under Russian control. Russia's offensive in the north of the Kharkiv which began this month saw its largest gains in 18 months. AFP

PORT MORESBY

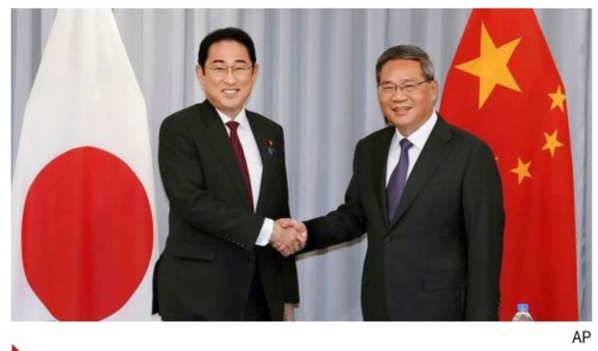
More than 670 estimated dead in Papua New Guinea landslip: UN

AFP

More than 670 people are believed to be dead after a massive landslip in Papua New Guinea, a UN official said on Sunday. The hillside village in Enga province was almost completely obliterated when the landslip struck in the early hours of Friday morning, burying scores of homes and the people sleeping inside them. AFP

SEOUL

China, Japan Premiers in South Korea for rare trilateral summit



AP

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Chinese Premier Li Qiang agreed on Sunday to start diplomatic and security dialogue and push a trade deal, when they met in Seoul ahead of a key trilateral summit with Japan. There are low expectations of major breakthroughs at the trilateral meeting on Monday. AFP

12 injured as Qatar Airways flight hit by turbulence

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Twelve persons were injured during turbulence on a Qatar Airways flight from Doha to Ireland that landed safely on Sunday, Dublin airport said.

The incident comes a week after a passenger died and dozens were injured when a Singapore Airlines flight from London hit severe turbulence and was diverted to Bangkok.

Six passengers and six crew members suffered injuries in the latest incident, when Qatar Airways flight QR017, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, endured turbulence over Turkiye.

The flight landed as scheduled shortly before 1 pm on Sunday.

Israel PM 'opposed' to ending the war in Gaza, convenes War Cabinet

Palestinian Premier in Brussels to meet EU officials; EU foreign policy chief says a 'functional Palestinian Authority is in Israel's interest too, because in order to make peace, we need a strong Palestinian Authority, not a weaker one'

Agence France-Presse
RAFAH

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday he "strongly opposes" ending the war in Gaza, ahead of his War Cabinet convening amid intense diplomacy to forge a truce and hostage release deal.

Meanwhile deadly fighting rocked the Gaza Strip and Hamas militants fired a salvo of rockets at Israel's commercial hub Tel Aviv for the first time in months, sending people scrambling for shelter.

Mr. Netanyahu has long rejected Hamas's demand in negotiations for a permanent end to the fighting, which was triggered by the Palestinian militant group's October 7 attack and has left vast areas of besieged Gaza in ruins.

Terror unleashed: Palestinians react after an Israeli strike on a building in Nuseirat in Gaza Strip on Saturday. AFP

A senior Israeli official had earlier said that "the war cabinet is expected to meet... tonight".

A statement issued by Mr. Netanyahu's office before the meeting said Hamas chief in Gaza Yahya "Sinwar continues to demand the end of the war, the withdrawal of the IDF (Army) from the Gaza Strip and leaving Hamas in place, so that it will be able to carry out the atrocities of October 7 again and again", referring to the attack that triggered the war.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu strongly opposes this," the statement said.

A member of Hamas's political leadership, Izzat al-Rishq, accused Mr. Netanyahu of "trying to buy more time to continue the aggression".

In Brussels, the European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told journalists before meeting Palestinian Premier Mohammed Mustafa that a strong Palestinian Authority (PA) was in Israel's interest.

"A functional Palestinian Authority is in Israel's interest too, because in order to make peace, we need a strong Palestinian Authority, not a weaker one," Mr. Borrell said.

Mr. Mustafa said the "first priority" was to support people in Gaza, especially through a ceasefire, and then "rebuilding the institutions of the Palestinian Authority".

In Berlin for state visit, Macron makes plea to defend democracy

Poll bugle: Emmanuel Macron, centre, and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, right, in Berlin on Sunday. REUTERS

Agence France-Presse
BERLIN

Emmanuel Macron arrived on Sunday in Berlin on the first state visit to Germany by a French President in a quarter century, bringing a plea to defend democracy against nationalism at upcoming European elections.

Mr. Macron made an appearance at a democracy festival in his first stop, where, accompanied by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the French President warned of a "form of fascination for authoritarianism which is growing" in the two major EU nations.

"We forget too often that it's a fight" to protect democracy, Mr. Macron said.

If the nationalists had been in power in Europe in the last years, "history would not have been the same", he said, pointing to decisions on the coronavirus pandemic or Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

'Alliance of democrats'

"We need an alliance of democrats in Europe," Mr. Steinmeier said.

The trip comes two weeks ahead of European elections where polls show, in a major potential embarrassment for Mr. Macron, that his coalition is trailing well behind the far right and may struggle to even reach third place.

In Germany too, all three parties in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition are polling behind the far-right AfD in surveys, despite a series of scandals embroiling the anti-immigration party.

In a keynote address on foreign policy last month, Mr. Macron issued a dire warning about the threats to Europe in a changing world in the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Europe's mortality

"Our Europe, today, is mortal and it can die," Mr. Macron said. "It can die and this depends only on our choices."

Ramping up his warning in Berlin, Mr. Macron urged Europeans "to go vote for the party that we back and a party that defends Europe".

After the talks with Steinmeier in Berlin on Sunday, Mr. Macron is due to bring his message to Dresden in the former East German Saxony state, where the AfD has a strong supporter base.

Nearly a million seek shelter as cyclone strikes Bangladesh

Agence France-Presse
PATUAKHALI

An intense cyclone smashed into the low-lying coast of Bangladesh on Sunday, with nearly a million people fleeing inland for concrete storm shelters away from howling gales and crashing waves.

"The severe Cyclone Remal has started crossing the Bangladesh coast," Bangladesh Meteorological Department Director Azizur Rahman said, adding the raging storm could continue hammering the coast until at least the early hours of Monday morning.

"We have so far recorded maximum wind speeds of 90 kmph, but the wind speed may pick up more pace." Forecasters predicted gusts of up to 130 kmph, with heavy rain and winds also lashing India.

Authorities have raised the danger signal to its highest level.

Cyclones have killed hundreds of thousands of people in Bangladesh in recent decades, but the number of superstorms hitting its densely populated coast has increased sharply, from one a year to as many as three, due to the impact of climate change.

"The cyclone could unleash a storm surge of up to 12 feet above normal astronomical tide, which can be dangerous," Bangladeshi senior weather official Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallik said.

Most of Bangladesh's coastal areas are a metre or two above sea level and high storm surges can devastate villages.

"We are terrified," said 35-year-old fisherman Yusuf Fakir at Kuakata, a town on the very southern tip of Bangladesh in the predicted route of the storm.

While he had sent his wife and children to a relative's home inland, he stayed put to guard their belongings.

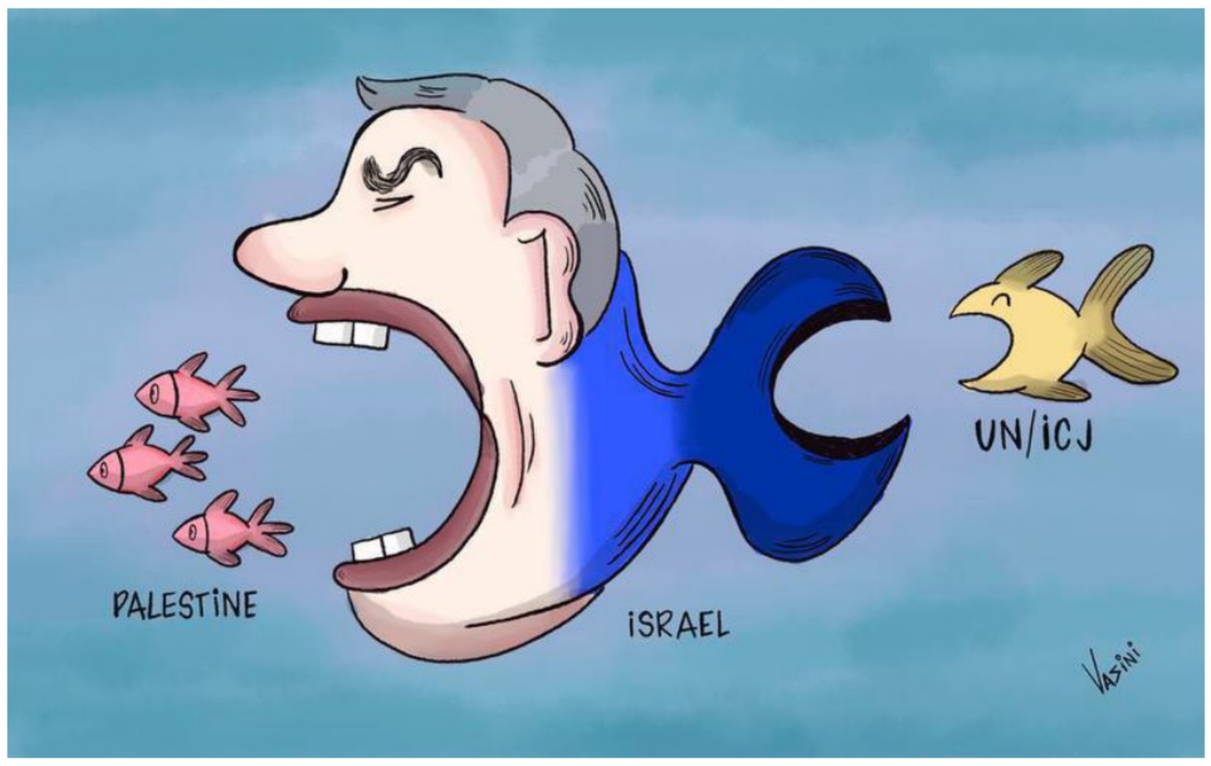
At least 8 lakh Bangladeshis fled their coastal villages, while more than 50,000 people in India also moved inland from the vast Sundarbans mangrove forest.

On the low-lying island of Bhashan Char, home to 36,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, 57 cyclone centres were opened, deputy refugee commissioner Mohammad Rafiqul Haque said.

The country's three seaports and the airport in the second-largest city Chittagong were closed.

Running for cover: A woman walks along a muddy path ahead of Cyclone Remal at Satkhira in Bangladesh on Sunday. REUTERS

On the draw



Saudi appoints Syria Ambassador after more than a decade

Agence France-Presse
RIYADH

Relations between Riyadh and Damascus thawed following a China-brokered deal

Saudi Arabia named a new Ambassador to Damascus Sunday, state media said, more than a year after the two Arab nations resumed ties following a prolonged rift over Syria's war.

The official Saudi Press Agency said the government had appointed Faisal bin Saud Al-Mejfel as its Ambassador to Syria.

The newly appointed envoy, according to the report, said he hoped to "serve the Kingdom's interests and strengthen the bilateral bonds between the two brotherly nations".

In May 2023, Saudi Arabia reopened its diplomatic mission in Damascus, which had been closed since 2012, after a surprise China-brokered rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran, an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government.

A Syrian Ambassador began working from Riyadh in December, and Saudi Arabia sent a charge d'affaires to Damascus shortly afterwards.

The kingdom cut ties with Mr. Assad's government as a crackdown on pro-democracy protests in 2011 spiralled into a conflict that has since killed more than 5,00,000 people and displaced millions.

At least 134, including one MSF worker, killed in clashes across Sudan's El-Fasher

Agence France-Presse
PORT SUDAN

At least 134 people have died at a single hospital in Darfur city of El-Fasher in western Sudan, Doctors without Borders said on Sunday, including one MSF team member.

War has raged for more than a year between the regular military under Army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces led by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

'Alarming new chapter'

El-Fasher in North Darfur is the only State capital in the vast western region not under RSF control, and is a key humanitarian hub for a region on the brink of famine.

It has seen sporadic clashes since the war broke out, but fierce fighting reignited on May 10 in what UN chief Antonio Guterres has called "an alarming new chapter" in the conflict.

Helping hands: Internally displaced women register to collect aid from a group at a camp in Sudan's Gadaref earlier this month. AFP

MSF said one of its pharmacy watchmen was killed on Saturday "when shelling hit his house".

At that hospital alone, where a team supported by MSF has treated 979 casualties just over two weeks, "the death toll has reached 134 – a sign of the violent intensity of the fighting", a statement from the medical charity said.

However, the real toll is probably much higher, with many residents not leaving their homes because of the fighting between the groups, even for emergency medical care.

According to the UN, supplies at El-Fasher's Southern Hospital will last barely a week.

Aid groups have repeatedly pleaded for safe access into the city to allow them to replenish depleted stocks and support exhausted medical teams across the area.

Effective siege

But an effective siege continues, with the UN reporting key roads "either blocked, subject to significant barriers to movement or unsafe".

Since the war began in April last year, tens of thousands of people have been killed, including up to 15,000 in a single West Darfur town, UN experts say.

Nearly nine million people have been forced from their homes.

TRUST IN PROCESS

Proud of the players for sticking with our approach: Helmot

R. RAGU

SRH assistant coach Simon Helmot said he was proud of the way his side played in this edition. "We finished 10th last year, and if you had told us at the start of the season that we would finish second, we would have been pleased. I am proud of the players for sticking with the approach that has allowed us to reach the final."

IN ELITE COMPANY

Shreyas becomes fifth Indian captain to lift the IPL Trophy

K.R. DEEPAK

Kolkata Knight Riders' Shreyas Iyer, on Sunday, became the fifth Indian skipper — after Chennai Super Kings' M.S. Dhoni (2010, 11, 18, 21 and 23), Knight Riders' Gautam Gambhir (2012 and 14), Mumbai Indians' Rohit Sharma (2013, 15, 17, 19 and 20) and Gujarat Titans' Hardik Pandya (2022) — to lift the IPL Trophy.

ALLROUND DISPLAY

Narine walks away with MVP award after fabulous season

K.R. DEEPAK

The IPL 2024 awards: **Emerging player:** Nitish Reddy; **Electric striker of the season:** Jake-Fraser McGurk; **Super Sixes:** Abhishek Sharma (42); **Fours:** Travis Head; **Catch of the season:** Ramandeep Singh; **Fairplay:** Sunrisers; **Orange Cap:** Virat Kohli; **Purple:** Harshal Patel; **Most Valuable Player:** Sunil Narine.

PROCESSION

Sunrisers Hyderabad registers lowest score in an IPL final

R. RAGU

Sunrisers Hyderabad recorded the lowest score in an IPL final (113 in 18.3 overs) during its IPL 2024 title match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. The previous low was 125 for nine by Chennai Super Kings against Mumbai Indians during the 2013 final.

Over the moon: Skipper Shreyas and his teammates cannot hide their delight after Knight Riders lifted the coveted IPL trophy for a third time. Incidentally, the Kolkata side won its maiden title in Chennai in 2012. K.R DEEPAK

It's Knight Riders' cup of joy as Sunrisers fall flat

The Shreyas-led side's brilliant bowling reduces Cummins' men to a record low in a summit clash; Venkatesh's blistering half-century takes the team home with eight wickets and 57 balls remaining

IPL-17 FINAL

N. Sudarshan
CHENNAI

Mike Tyson is supposed to have said, according to sporting folklore, that "everyone has a plan... until they get punched in the face."

Sunrisers Hyderabad had a plan, until Kolkata Knight Riders landed a knockout punch to win its third Indian Premier League title with an eight-wicket victory at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here on Sunday.

SRH won the toss and batted first, betting on its now-patented target-setting ability and the belief that there would be no dew to hamper its bowlers like in Qualifier 2 versus Rajasthan Royals. But so lethal was the KKR bowling pack, led by Mitchell Starc (3-0-14-2), that SRH's best-laid plans fell hopelessly flat.

Pat Cummins' men chose the worst day to make their lowest total of the season, a paltry 113. Shreyas & Co. batted with whirlwind intent, allowing SRH not even a sniff, to chase down the score with more than nine overs to spare. KKR's first IPL triumph was also at Chepauk, way back in 2012, with the now mentor Gautam Gambhir at the helm.

Sunil Narine hit the first ball he faced, from Cummins, into the stands at deep mid-wicket. He perished the very next delivery, but it made his team's intentions clear. In the third over, Venkatesh Iyer smashed Bhuvneshwar Kumar for two humongous sixes down the ground.

The left-hander would continue in the same vein, carting T. Natarajan for three fours and a six in the sixth over. At the other end, Rahmanullah Gurbaz played a steady hand (39, 32b, 5x4, 2x6) before Venkatesh (52, 26b, 4x4, 3x6), like he had in Qualifier 1, carried his side home.

Earlier, Starc proved yet again that he was a man for the big occasion. In the very first over, he ended Abhishek Sharma's nervous five-ball stay with a peach of a delivery that pitched on middle-stump and rattled the top of off.

Vaibhav Arora, who swung the ball both ways, struck the second big blow, forcing Travis Head to edge behind for a duck (his third in four innings). When the in-form Rahul Tripathi top-edged a flick to Ramandeep Singh in front of square to give Starc his second scalp, SRH was reeling at 21 for three.

Aiden Markram hung around for a bit (20, 23b, 3x4), hitting Arora for two fours in the final over of the PowerPlay to take SRH to 40 for three. But the recovery proved a mirage, as wickets fell at regular intervals. Nitish Kumar Reddy was caught behind off an express delivery from Harshit Rana and Markram holed out to long-on off Andre Russell.

Shahbaz Ahmed, the hero against RR, tried a sweep but was out caught at short-fine. With no option left, Abdul Samad was summoned as the Impact Player and he lasted all of four balls, edging Russell behind to Gurbaz.

Cummins, batting at No. 9, was SRH's top-scorer (24, 19b, 2x4, 1x6). To be sure, the Australian is no mug with the bat, but if he is the leading batter in a side comprising Abhishek, Head, Heinrich Klaasen and Markram, it does paint a grim picture. And so it did.

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Abhishek Sharma b Starc 2 (*5b*), Travis Head c Gurbaz b Vaibhav 0 (*1b*), Rahul Tripathi c Ramandeep b Starc 9 (*13b, 1x4*), Aiden Markram c Starc b Russell 20 (*23b, 3x4*), Nitish Kumar c Gurbaz b Harshit 13 (*10b, 1x4, 1x6*), Heinrich Klaasen b Harshit 16 (*17b, 1x4*), Shahbaz Ahmed c Narine b Varun 8 (*7b, 1x6*), Abdul Samad **(Impact Player in place of Head)** c Gurbaz b Russell 4 (*4b*), Pat Cummins c Starc b Russell 24 (*19b, 2x4, 1x6*), Jaydev Unadkat lbw b Narine 4 (*11b*), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (not out) 0 (*1b*); Extras (b-5, lb-2, w-6): 13; Total (in 18.3 overs): 113.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-2 (Abhishek, 0.5 overs), 2-6 (Head, 1.6), 3-21 (Tripathi, 4.2), 4-47 (Nitish, 6.6), 5-62 (Markram, 10.2), 6-71 (Shahbaz, 11.5), 7-77 (Samad, 12.4), 8-90 (Klaasen, 14.1), 9-113 (Unadkat, 17.5).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Starc 3-0-14-2, Vaibhav 3-0-24-1, Harshit 4-1-24-2, Narine 4-0-16-1, Russell 2.3-0-19-3, Varun 2-0-9-1.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Rahmanullah Gurbaz lbw b Shahbaz 39 (*32b, 5x4, 2x6*), Sunil Narine c Shahbaz b Cummins 6 (*2b, 1x6*), Venkatesh Iyer (not out) 52 (*26b, 4x4, 3x6*), Shreyas Iyer (not out) 6 (*3b, 1x4*); Extras (b-4, lb-2, w-5): 11; Total (for two wkts. in 10.3 overs): 114.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-11 (Narine, 1.2), 2-102 (Gurbaz, 8.5).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 2-0-25-0, Cummins 2-0-18-1, Natarajan 2-0-29-0, Shahbaz 2.3-0-22-1, Unadkat 1-0-9-0, Markram 1-0-5-0.

Toss: SRH; **PoM:** Starc.

KKR won by eight wickets with 57 deliveries to spare.

Honours board

2008	Rajasthan Royals
2009	Deccan Chargers
2010	Chennai Super Kings
2011	Chennai Super Kings
2012	Kolkata Knight Riders
2013	Mumbai Indians
2014	Kolkata Knight Riders
2015	Mumbai Indians
2016	Sunrisers Hyderabad
2017	Mumbai Indians
2018	Chennai Super Kings
2019	Mumbai Indians
2020	Mumbai Indians
2021	Chennai Super Kings
2022	Gujarat Titans
2023	Chennai Super Kings
2024	Kolkata Knight Riders

Thrills and spills: Abhishek was castled by a Starc beauty in the first over while Harshit piled on the agony for Sunrisers with two wickets. Ramandeep, right, held on to a skier from Tripathi before Venkatesh sealed the deal with an aggressive knock. K.R. DEEPAK & R. RAGU

Alcaraz makes confident start, Osaka overcomes Bronzetti

The Spaniard registers his first win since coming back from the right forearm injury that sidelined him for almost a month; Sonego stuns No. 17 Humbert, the highest-ranked Frenchman in the tournament

FRENCH OPEN

Associated Press
PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz made a confident start at the French Open on Sunday, overwhelming J.J. Wolf 6-1, 6-2, 6-1.

It was the Spaniard's first win since coming back from the right forearm injury that sidelined him for almost a month. "I'm almost at 100% of my abilities," Alcaraz said. "After the match, I didn't feel anything."

In the women's draw, Naomi Osaka marked her seventh appearance in Paris with a 1-6, 6-4, 7-5 first-round victory over Lucia Bronzetti.

"There were moments I played pretty well, but I was pretty nervous and got really tight," said the No. 134-ranked Osaka of her hard-fought victory during an on-court interview.

Osaka secured her first victory in a Grand Slam tournament since 2022. She made her comeback in January after a maternity leave. Osaka advanced to what could be a matchup against No. 1 Iga Swiatek, the three-time French Open winner and defending champion.

Elsewhere, No. 30 Dayan Yastremska eliminated Ajla Tomljanovic while Lesia Tsurenko forfeited after playing less than a set against Donna Vekic because of a back problem.

In the men's draw, No. 6 Andrey Rublev defeated Taro Daniel 6-2, 6-7(3), 6-3, 7-5. Rublev showed some frustration during his match, throwing his racket at one stage. Lorenzo Sonego stunned No. 17 Ugo Humbert 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3. Humbert was the highest-ranked Frenchman in the tournament. Hubert Hurkacz beat Shintaro Mochizuki 4-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-0, 6-3, and Grigor Dimitrov routed Aleksandar Kovacevic in three sets.

Play was interrupted for a little more than an hour on all 18 clay courts because of rain, except for the two largest equipped with retractable roofs.

Hard-fought win: Osaka secured her first victory in a Grand Slam tournament since 2022. GETTY IMAGES

TOP RESULTS

First round:
Men: 6-Rublev (Rus) bt Daniel (Jpn) 6-2, 6-7(3), 6-3, 7-5; Sonego (Ita) bt 17-Humbert (Fra) 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3; 3-Alcaraz (Esp) bt Wolf (USA) 6-1, 6-2, 6-1; 10-Dimitrov (Bul) bt Kovacevic (USA) 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.
Women: Osaka (Jpn) bt Bronzetti (Ita) 6-1, 4-6, 7-5; Bouzkova (Cze) bt 29-Kudermetova (Rus) 6-2, 6-4; 30-Yastremska (Ukr) bt Tomljanovic (Aus) 3-6, 6-3, 6-3; 9-Ostapenko (Lat) bt Cristian (Rou) 6-4, 7-5; Kenin (USA) bt Siegemund (Ger) 4-6, 6-2, 6-2; 21-Garcia (Fra) bt Lys (Ger) 4-6, 7-5, 6-2.

Monday's Picks

Men
2-Sinner vs Eubanks
4-Zverev vs Nadal
5-Medvedev vs Koepfer
9-Tsitsipas vs Fucsovics
18-Khachanov vs Nagal

Women
1-Swiatek vs Jeanjean
5-Vondrousova vs Masarova
6-Sakkari vs Gracheva
11-Collins vs Dolehide
15-Svitolina vs Pliskova

Age barrier for Nadal? Three 40-something trailblazers

Ready: Nadal will be keen on adding to his Grand Slam tally. AFP

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Rafael Nadal has not "100% closed the door" on extending his career despite his 38th birthday fast approaching and with his ranking having slipped to an injury-impacted 275 in the world.

Whether or not he adds to his 22 Grand Slam titles at the French Open, where is a 14-time champion, remains to be seen but plenty of players have continued to defy time.

AFP Sport looks at three men who blazed a trail that Nadal could yet still follow:
Roger Federer – Nadal's rival and close friend Federer played until he was 41, closing the door on his career at a teary Laver Cup in London in 2022. In an emotional moment courtside, Nadal even grasped the hand of the great Swiss whose collection of 20 Grand Slams has since been exceeded by Novak Djokovic's 24 and the 22 of Nadal.

The last of Federer's Majors came at the 2018 Australian Open when he 36 years, five months and seven days old.

Ken Rosewall – Australia's Rosewall remains the oldest man to win a Grand Slam title, capturing his eighth Major at the 1972 Australian Open when he was 37.

Rosewall was 39 when he lost the 1974 finals at Wimbledon and the US Open to Jimmy Connors.

He eventually retired from the sport in 1980 just before his 46th birthday at an indoor tournament in Melbourne while his last two titles were won when he was 43 in Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Jimmy Connors – The flamboyant and combative Connors won eight Grand Slam titles in his career, only retiring in 1996 at the age of 43.

His longevity allowed him to claim 109 titles which is still a men's record. The American also made his mark in 1991 when he went all the way to the US Open semifinals at the age of 39 despite entering the tournament on a wildcard and with a ranking of 174.

McCoy replaces Holder in WI squad

Press Trust of India
ST JOHN'S (ANTIGUA)

The West Indies on Sunday named Obed McCoy as Jason Holder's replacement for the upcoming T20 World Cup, with the latter being ruled out due to an injury which he sustained while playing the County Championship.

"Jason's absence will undoubtedly be felt both on and off the field. We look forward to having a fully fit Jason with us again soon," lead selector Desmond Haynes said.

Chase and Motie script a convincing win for WI

Agence France-Presse
KINGSTON

Roston Chase struck a magnificent 38-ball 67 as West Indies beat South Africa by 16 runs at Sabina Park to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20I series.

Chase led a strong batting performance from the home side who made 207 for seven and while South Africa made a fast start it was unable to get close to the target.

Thescores: West Indies 207/7 in 20 overs (Roston Chase 67) bt South Africa 191/7 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 41, Motie 3/22). **Toss**: West Indies.

India should continue to win in Australia, says Gavaskar

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

Discussing the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Australia great Matthew Hayden said here on Saturday that the Australian team is in a transition period and vulnerable at the top, with the need for a new opening batter to replace David Warner.

Three stars: Hayden, Harbhajan, and Gavaskar at the launch event to promote Australia-India Summer of Cricket. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vulnerable

"Well, it's a time in Australian cricket where it's a transition period. And so, we're vulnerable at the top. I was very forthright in saying this; Steve Smith should never have been the opening batter for Australia. And I still believe that's the case.

"So, we are on the lookout for, I believe, another opening batter to replace the great David Warner, who's had an exceptional career.

"He really, I feel, built on the legacy that JL (Justin Langer) and I created in our period. He went better. Whereas our strike rate was 65 to 70, Dave Warner was 80 and sometimes more," he said during the panel discussion on India-Australia cricket with the legendary Sunil Gavaskar and former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh at the launch of the Australia-India Summer of Cricket, organised by the Australian Consulate in partnership with Cricket Australia (CA) and the Centre for Australia-India Relations.

"It's really a battle of the top order. And Australian cricket has put itself in a position where it's kind of got no further games to really anticipate what it's going to look like ahead of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," he added.

India is set to play five Tests at the Perth Stadium, Adelaide Oval, Gabba, Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), and Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) from Nov. 22 to Jan. 7.

Asked for his wish list for the series, Gavaskar said: "My wish list is, obviously, India should continue to win in Australia – twice they've won now, and so for the third time as well.

"Hope it's a good, close series with the matches going into the fifth day. A lot of Test matches finish in three-and-a-half, four days. A five-day Test would be fantastic for everybody concerned, where Australia and India keep on dominating for four days alternately, and maybe on the fifth day the team that has really got that greater desire goes out and wins. And all five Test matches should have a result.

"On an individual level, maybe for Virat Kohli, that he becomes the third overseas player who's scored a Test century in all the Australian venues. I think he doesn't have one at the Gabba. So if he gets a century at the Gabba, that means he joins me and Alastair Cook."

Dipa becomes first Indian gymnast to win gold in Asian Senior C'ships

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Dipa Karmakar landed a gold medal in vault to become the first Indian gymnast to win the continental title in the Asian women's artistic gymnastics championships in Tashkent on Sunday.

The 30-year-old Dipa, who was eighth with 12.650 in the qualification, scored an identical 13.566 in her two attempts for an overall 13.566 in the final. She was followed by North Koreans Kim Son Hyang (13.466, after a penalty of 0.100) and Jo Kyong Byol (12.966).

It was Dipa's second medal in the championships after her bronze (14.725) in Hiroshima in 2015. Ashish Kumar (floor exercise, bronze, Surat, 2006) and Pranati Nayak (vault, bronze medals in Ulaanbaatar, 2019, and Doha, 2022) are the other Indians to claim Asian championships medals.

Remarkable: It was Dipa's second medal in the championships after her bronze in Hiroshima in 2015. X@MEDIA_SAI

It was a remarkable performance by Dipa, who struggled through injuries, two knee surgeries and a 21-month suspension for a doping violation.

For someone who missed out on crucial opportunities to qualify for the Paris Olympics, first due to her suspension and then due to a decision not to send the team for one of the four Apparatus World Cups, the Asian gold was a big consolation.

Elated

"I can't say how happy I am. This performance has come after surgeries and suspension. No other (Indian) gymnast has done this. So, this medal is really special," Dipa told *The Hindu*.

"I must thank (my coach Bishweshwar) Nandi sir. He has been with me through all my difficult times."

Dipa, who made history when she finished fourth in the 2016 Rio Olympics vault final and narrowly missed out on a medal, said: "Of course, not being able to qualify for the Olympics was disappointing. But now I want to enjoy this moment."

Slim chances

Nandi said Dipa's chances of qualifying through the Asian championships, where only one Olympic slot was available for the best all-around performer (and third-placed Filipino Emma Malabuyo took it), was slim.

Dipa finished 16th in the all-around qualification and 14th in the final.

"Dipa overcame odds to achieve this. She is heading towards the end of her career. I will speak to her father and see whether she will continue," said Nandi.

Boxers Abhinash and Nishant advance in Olympic qualifiers

Press Trust of India
BANGKOK

Indian boxers continued their good run on day three of the second World Boxing Qualifiers for Paris Olympics as Abhinash Jamwal (63.5kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg) comfortably won here on Sunday.

Abhinash, who had replaced Olympian Shiva Thapa in the second qualifiers, was at his best against Andriejus Lavrenovas of Lithuania in his first-round bout.

The Himachal Pradesh boxer was clinical with his punches in the opening round and dominated the ring further as his confidence sore higher to earn a unanimous 5-0 verdict from the judges.

Later, World championship bronze medallist Nishant also secured a dominant 5-0 win over Armando Bighafa of Guinea-Bissau.

Nishant never looked under any kind of pressure as he controlled the bout from the very first minute and continued with his flurry of punches in the second round too to put the opponent completely on the back foot and get a unanimous verdict.

On Monday, Ankushita Boro will start her 60kg campaign against Namuun Monkhor of Mongolia while Loura will face Kelyn Cassidy of Ireland in the 80kg round of 32.

India has so far earned three Paris Olympic berths at the 2022 Asian Games.

Taking it all in: Kroos and his family embracing Real fans' love after the side's last home match of the season. AFP

Kroos bids emotional farewell to Bernabeu

Reuters
MADRID

Toni Kroos bade an emotional farewell to Real Madrid fans at a sold-out Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday as the German midfielder played his final home game after a remarkable decade with the Spanish giant.

A goalless draw with Real Betis was largely irrelevant with Real confirmed as LaLiga champion and all the European qualification and relegation spots decided, so the evening was about celebrating the 34-year-old Kroos.

One of Real's most successful ever players after making 464 appearances and helping it win more than 20 major trophies including four European Cups, Kroos announced that he will retire after this year's European Championship on home soil.

In the 85th minute, Kroos broke down in tears when, after receiving another standing ovation as he was substituted, he embraced his three children who were crying on the sidelines.

The results: LaLiga: Real Betis 0 drew with Real Madrid 0; Getafe 1 (Alvarez 48) lost to Mallorca 2 (Muriqi 90, Maffeo 90+3); Celta Vigo 2 (Aspas 49-pen, Douvikas 62) drew with (Dominguez 5-og, Mari 60-pen); Las Palmas 1 (Cardona 71) drew with Alaves 1 (Vicente 50). **Serie A:** AC Milan 3 (Leao 22, Giroud 27, Calabria 77) drew with Salernitana 3 (Simy 64, 89, Sambia 87).

Ferrari's Leclerc ends Monaco jinx in style; Verstappen sixth

The local boy wins his first race in the city after six attempts; Piastri finishes runner-up while Sainz claims the third spot; the Red Bull driver's championship lead diminishes from 48 to 31 after getting beaten only the third time in eight races

FORMULA ONE

Reuters
MONACO

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc celebrated a dream Monaco Grand Prix victory on Sunday to become the first home winner of Formula One's showcase race since Louis Chiron raced around the city streets in 1931.

It was the first time the 26-year-old had stood on the Monaco podium in six attempts and came after two standing starts from pole position in a race halted when first-lap collisions took out a fifth of the field.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri finished runner-up, 7.1 seconds behind after 78 laps without a chance to overtake on a circuit that often produces processional races, and Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was third.

Historic: Leclerc became the first home winner in Monaco since Chiron in 1931. GETTY IMAGES

"It's the race that made me dream of becoming a Formula One driver one day."

Red Bull's championship leader and 2023 Monaco winner Max Verstappen started and finished sixth, only the third time in eight races this season that the triple world champion has been beaten. McLaren's Lando Norris was fourth and George Russell fifth for Mercedes. Leclerc's success, and first win since the 2022 Austrian Grand Prix, trimmed Verstappen's championship lead to 31 points from 48.

Leclerc had twice before started from pole in Monaco, in 2021 and 2022, but failed to convert the huge advantage into a top-three finish on streets he has known all his life.

The results: 1: Leclerc (Ferrari) 2h:23m:15.554s; 2: Piastri (McLaren) +7.152; 3. Sainz (Ferrari) 7.585; 4. Norris (McLaren) 8.650; 5: Russell (Mercedes) 13.309; 6: Verstappen (Red Bull) 13.853; 7.Hamilton (Mercedes) 14.908; **+1 lap:** 8. Tsunoda (RB); 9. Albon (Williams); 10. Gasly (Alpine); **+2 laps:** 11. Alonso (Aston Martin); 12. Ricciardo (RB); 13. Bottas (Stake F1); 14. Stroll (Aston Martin); 15. Sargeant (Williams); 16. Zhou (Stake F1); **DNF:** Ocon (Alpine); Perez (Red Bull); Hulkenberg (Haas); Magnussen (Haas);

Standings:

Drivers: 1. Verstappen 169; 2. Leclerc 138; 3. Norris 113; 4. Sainz 108; 5. Perez 107.

Constructors: 1. Red Bull 276; 2. Ferrari 252; 3. McLaren 184; 4. Mercedes 96; 5. Aston Martin 44.

Indian men's side goes down to Belgium in shootout

PRO LEAGUE

Press Trust of India
ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

The Indian men's hockey team lost to reigning Olympic champion Belgium in shootout after the two sides were locked 2-2 in regulation time in the FIH Pro League here on Saturday.

India, ranked sixth in the world, lost 1-3 in the shootout to take one point. World No. 3 Belgium secured two points, including the bonus point for winning the shootout.

Taking lead

Araijeet Singh Hundal put India in the lead in the 11th minute with a fine field goal before Felix Denayer (30th minute) restored parity just a few seconds before half-time off a penalty corner.

Florent Van Aubel put the host ahead for the first time in the match with a 50th minute goal from a penalty corner but Sukhjeet Singh (57th) equalised three minutes before the end of regulation time.

In the shootout, only Sukhjeet Singh scored for India, while Vivek Sagar Prasad, Abhishek and Araijeet Singh Hundal missed.

Indian women's hockey team remains winless

Press Trust of India
ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

The Indian women's hockey team continued its winless streak in the Belgium leg of the FIH Pro League, slumping to 0-3 defeat against Argentina here on Sunday.

Celina di Santo (1st minute), Maria Campoy (39th) and Maria Granatto (47th) scored for Argentina in India's final match of the Belgium leg.

India began stringing a few passes together and got into the game.

It forced Argentine goalkeeper Clara Barberi into action after a low drive into the circle from Udita found Lalremsiami, who failed to score from close range.

Argentina regained control of the proceedings in the second quarter, earning a slurry of penalty corners but an alert duo of Bichu Devi Kharibam and Salima Tete helped keep the ball out of the nets.

Argentina pressed hard in the rest of the quarter but the Indian defence held firm to keep the scoreline 0-1 heading into the second half.

Breakthrough

Argentina made a breakthrough in the 39th minute, as Campoy picked up the ball on the left wing and bulldozed into the circle, dodging a few challenges to double the lead.

Argentina earned a penalty corner as soon as the final quarter began and Granatto directed Agustina Gorzelany's flick over Savita into goal to increase its lead.

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise & a group Company of IndianOil)
[CIN – L40101TN1965GOI005389]
Regd. Office: No.536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai – 600 018
Website: www.cpcl.co.in Email ID: shankarp@cpcl.co.in, Phone No.: (044)24346807

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Notice to Shareholders

Transfer of Unclaimed Equity Dividend & Shares to Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF)

The Notice is published pursuant to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Investors Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016 ("The Rules") as amended from time to time.

The Rules, inter-alia, provide for transfer of all shares in respect of which dividend has remained unclaimed for seven consecutive years to the Investors Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) set up by the Central Government. Accordingly, the shareholders who have not claimed the dividend for the Financial Year 2016-2017 and all other Dividends pending unclaimed for 7 consecutive years thereafter, the unclaimed Dividend & shares held by them are liable to be transferred to the IEPF. The Company has sent individual communication vide letter dated 24.05.2024 to those shareholders at their latest available address. The Company has also uploaded the details of such shareholders along with details of shares due for transfer to IEPF on its website at www.cpcl.co.in. Shareholders are requested to refer to the web link https://cpcl.co.in/investors/share-holder-information/iepf/ to verify the details of the shares liable to be transferred to IEPF. Further, it was also highlighted in the Annual Report 2022-2023 that as per Section 124 (6) of Companies Act, 2013 read with the Rules made there under all shares in respect of which dividend has not been claimed for 7 consecutive years or more shall be transferred by the company in the name of IEPF.

Notice is hereby given to all such shareholders to make an application to the Company / Registrar & Transfer Agent (RTA) viz., KFin Technologies Limited by 15.09.2024 for claiming the unpaid dividend for the Financial Year 2016-2017 onwards so that the unclaimed Dividend & Shares are not liable to be transferred to the IEPF. It may please be noted that if no reply is received by the Company or the RTA by 15.09.2024 the Company will be compelled to transfer the above mentioned Unpaid Equity Dividend and shares on 23.09.2024 to the IEPF, without any further notice and no claim shall lie against the Company. The shareholders holding shares in physical form and whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPF Authority, may note that upon such transfer the original share certificate(s) lying with them will stand automatically cancelled and deemed non-negotiable. The Company will be preparing new share certificate(s) in lieu of such original share certificate(s) for transfer of the same to IEPF Authority.

It may also be noted that the shares transferred to IEPF, including all benefits accruing on such shares, if any, can be claimed back from the IEPF Authority after following the procedures prescribed under the Rules. For any further clarification on the matter, please contact Mr.Mohd. Mohsinuddin, KFin Technologies Limited, Selenium Tower B, Plot Number 31-32, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Hyderabad – 500 032; Toll Free No.: 1800 309 4001; E-mail Address: mohd.mohsin@kfintech.com / einward.ris@kfintech.com.

For Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
Sd/-
P. Shankar
Company Secretary

Place : Chennai
Dated : 27th May, 2024

THE HINDU GROUP

SOMETIMES, CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE NEED CHAMPIONS TOO.

Sometimes, makers of change need believers in change. They need visionaries to foresee their vision. They need voices to amplify their cries. Hands to lift them up when circumstances pull them down. Cheers to keep them going when the road gets rough. They need unbiased individuals with no ulterior motives to support them. Champions of change need champions like you to nominate them, give their ideas a platform and back them up.

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INBRIEF

Leverkusen lifts German Cup, claims a first double

Granit Xhaka scored as a 10-man Bayer Leverkusen beat Kaiserslautern 1-0 to lift the German Cup in Berlin on Saturday, winning the club's first double. Crowned Bundesliga champion in mid-April, Leverkusen was made to fight hard against its second-division opponents, after Odilon Kossounou was sent off just before half-time. Xhaka's 16th-minute goal was enough as Leverkusen bounced back from Wednesday's Europa League final loss to Atalanta – which ended its season-long unbeaten run of 51 games and hopes of a treble.

PSG wins French Cup in Mbappe's last appearance

Paris Saint-Germain beat Lyon 2-1 in Saturday's French Cup final to win the trophy in Kylian Mbappe's farewell appearance for the club. Mbappe, who is out of contract and expected to join Real Madrid, was not on target in a game played in Lille, with Ousmane Dembele and Fabian Ruiz scoring PSG's goals before Jake O'Brien pulled one back.

The result: Lyon 1 (O'Brien 55) lost to Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Dembele 22, Ruiz 34).

PGA Tour golfer Murray passes away aged 30

US golfer Grayson Murray, who won his second PGA Tour title at the Sony Open in January, passed away on Saturday aged 30, the Tour said in a statement. Murray had withdrawn from the Charles Schwab Challenge with an unspecified illness during Friday's second round in Texas. "We were devastated to learn – and are heartbroken to share – that PGA Tour player Grayson Murray passed away this morning. I am at a loss for words," PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan said in a statement. "The PGA Tour is a family, and when you lose a member of your family, you are never the same."

Deepika loses her semifinal and bronze medal matches

India's Deepika Kumari lost her semifinal and bronze matches to finish outside the podium in the recurve women's individual competition of the Archery World Cup Stage-2 at Yecheon (South Korea) on Sunday. Deepika, who was beaten 6-0 by reigning World champion Lim Sihyeon in the final and finished with a silver medal in Stage-1 in Shanghai, again went down 6-2 to the top-ranked Korean in the semifinals. Later, the experienced Indian fell archer to Worlds silver medallist and Olympic team bronze medallist Alejandra Valencia of Mexico 6-4 in the bronze medal contest. India finished Stage-2 without a recurve medal.

Aryan-Adhithya pair wins title in Jamaica

Aryan Shah and Adhithya Ganesan of USA beat Max Benaim and Daniel Vishnick of Britain 6-1, 6-4 in the doubles final of the $15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament in Kingston, Jamaica on Saturday. It was a maiden title in the professional circuit for the 18-year-old Aryan who had made the singles and doubles final last week in the same place. Meanwhile, the commendable run of National champion Siddharth Vishwakarma was stopped in the final of the $25,000 event in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as he was beaten 6-2, 6-2 by Philip Henning of South Africa.

The results: $25,000 ITF men, Addis Ababa: Final: Philip Henning (RSA) bt Siddharth Vishwakarma 6-2, 6-2.

$15,000 ITF men, Kingston: Doubles (final): Adhithya Ganesan (USA) & Aryan Shah bt Max Benaim & Daniel Vishnick (GBR) 6-1, 6-4.

Sindhu stutters in the final against Wang

The Indian ace fritters away a 11-3 lead in the decider after going toe to toe with the Chinese opponent for most part of the contest in a marathon three-setter

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

Star Indian shuttler P. V. Sindhu blew away a massive 11-3 lead in the deciding game of the Malaysia Masters final against Wang Zhi Yi, missing out on a great opportunity to end her title drought here on Sunday. The trophy was well within her reach but Sindhu suffered a shocking meltdown after the final change of ends to go down 21-16, 5-21, 16-21 against the Chinese World No.7 in 79 minutes.

Sindhu used a combination of poise and power to dominate the proceedings against the reigning Asian champion for most part of the match but all fell apart after the break in the decider as the trophy slipped out of her hands.

Coming up short: Sindhu missed a golden opportunity to win a title after dominating for most part. FILE PHOTO

Keenly contested

The final lived up to the expectations as the two traded blows right from the start, looking to play at a high pace. Sindhu managed a 6-4 lead only for Wang to claw back with two points.

The Indian showed great defence and kept putting the pressure on Wang, who too aimed to inject pace in the rallies and disposed of anything in the hitting zone.

But the Chinese overdid things as a cross-court net flick and another return went wide.

The rallies got tighter and fast-paced but Sindhu managed to hold an 11-9 lead at the break.

Sindhu left Wang crammed for space with her returns to move to 13-9. The angled returns, the defensive lifts and trademark smashes became more regular as Sindhu dominated the proceedings to jump to a 17-10 lead.

Wang made it 16-19. However, Sindhu grabbed four game points when Wang went long and sealed it comfortably.

In the decider,Sindhu took a 11-3 lead at the interval

Wang scripted a sensational turnaround after the break as she won two punishing rallies, which included 55 and 56 shots.

Wang grabbed six championship points with another precise return at the backline.

World No.1 Viktor Axelsen captured the Malaysia Masters crown edging out Lee Zii Jia 21-6, 20-22, 21-13, to secure his maiden silverware of the year.

The results: (finals, Indians unless specified):
Men's Singles: Viktor Axelsen (Dut) bt Lee Jia (Mal) 21-6, 20-22, 21-13; **Women's Singles**: Wang Zhi Yi (Chn) bt P.V. Sindhu 16-21, 21-5, 21-16.

Worthy battle: Sindhu and Wang at the presentation. BWF

Sindhu takes a lot of positives despite loss

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

P.V. Sindhu says she will take home a lot of positives and confidence despite losing the Malaysia Masters summit clash to China's world No. 7 Wang Zhi Yi here on Sunday.

"It's sad that I didn't get the result that I had expected. I should have pulled it off, maintaining the lead (in the decider), but there were really good rallies and she also came back.

"Overall, I can say that it's been a very good match. It's a bit disappointing, but a lot of positives to take from this match and the whole tournament as well," said Sindhu ranked 15th in the world.

"I am happy that I at least came to the finals, I played well. These matches will definitely give me a lot of confidence, but I could have won that. It's just not one of those days," she added.

The former world champion conceded she committed far too many errors.

"I think the second game was literally at some point like 16-4 or 17-4. It was a really long gap to even cover and then I continuously made mistakes and it was a bit hard to control. I gave her a huge lead.

"But the third game I was on point, I was doing well. Maybe I should have (won). When I'd taken the 13-8 lead, 11-3 lead, I should have maintained that."

Sindhu added that she would work with her coach and try to come back stronger in the Singapore Open from May 28.

"I will go back and see what improvements need to be done with my coach and of course prepare for Singapore. It's not just over with this tournament, so it's important to get back be prepared for the next tournament. It's important that you keep pumping up, you keep pushing yourself, you keep encouraging yourself in these low times. That's what I can do now at the moment."

Not injured, withdrew as a precautionary move: Neeraj

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Olympic javelin champion Neeraj Chopra on Sunday clarified that he is not injured but has pulled out of the Ostrava Golden Spike meet in the Czech Republic on May 28 as a precautionary measure after he felt "something" on his adductor muscles during a recent training session.

Neeraj said he would not want to risk injury in an Olympic year and hence decided to skip the prestigious meet. "Following a recent throwing session, I decided not to compete in Ostrava as I felt something in my adductor.

"I have had problems with it in the past and pushing it at this stage can lead to injury," Neeraj wrote on his Instagram.

Neeraj. FILE PHOTO K.R DEEPAK

"Just to clarify, I am not injured but I don't want to take any risk during the Olympic year so had to take this decision. Once I feel it's fully recovered, I will get back to competitions," he added.

Neeraj's clarification came just hours after the organisers of the meet said he has decided to skip the event due to an injury he sustained while training two weeks ago.

"Due to an injury that he sustained in training two weeks ago (adductor muscle) he will not be able to throw in Ostrava, but he will arrive at the event as a guest," the organisers of Golden Spike said earlier in the day. "The organisers did note a message from the Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra."

Julian Weber of Germany will be the Indian's replacement.

Srihari wins silver in Mare Nostrum swimming

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Ace India swimmer Srihari Nataraj clinched a silver medal in the 50m backstroke event at the 30th Mare Nostrum swimming tour at the Canet-en-Roussillon, France, on Saturday.

Nataraj, who competed at the Tokyo Olympics, clocked 25.50s to claim the second spot on the podium behind Hungary's Adam Jaszo, who touched the pad at 25.46s.

Scott Gibson of Great Britain finished third with a timing of 25.64s.

Nataraj's personal best in the event is 25.11s.

The 50m backstroke is a non-Olympic event.

No Indian swimmer has made the cut for the Paris Games till now.

Srihari clocked 25.50s. @MEDIA_SAI

The Mare Nostrum Tour, which began on Saturday, is a nine-day competition conducted across three cities – Monaco, Barcelona and Canet.

Carlsen leads a strong field featuring the world's best

NORWAY CHESS

Sports Bureau

The Norway Chess tournament opens at Stavanger, Norway, on Monday.

The championship features some of the world's strongest players in both the open and women's sections.

World No. 1 and five-time World champion Magnus Carlsen of the host nation leads the field.

The world No. 2 and 3, Fabiana Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura, both of the United States, are also in the fray.

Reigning World champion Ding Liren of China is another major attraction.

R. Praggnanandhaa, who is ranked 14th in the world, is the Indian representative.

His elder sister R. Vaishali is playing in the women's event, along with fellow-Indian Koneru Humpy. World champion Ju Wenjun of China is the top seed.

Equal prize money

The tournament, which carries equal prize money in the open and women's sections, will conclude on June 7.

The pairings for first round:
Open: Magnus Carlsen (Nor) v Fabiano Caruana (USA.
Hikaru Nakamura (USA) v Ding Liren (Chn).
R. Praggnanandhaa v Alireza Firouzja (Fra).
Women: Ju Wenjun (Chn) v Lei Tingjie (Chn); Koneru Humpy v Anna Muzychuk (Ukr.
R. Vaishali v Pia Cramling (Swe).

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Conference Finals, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 5.30 a.m.

Roland Garros: Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 2.30 p.m. onwards.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Mahesh does the 'trick as Juno FC has it easy

M. Mahesh's hat-trick powered Juno FC to a 4-0 win over Bagalkunte FC 'C' division football league.

The results: Juno FC 4 (G. Prithvi 16, M. Mahesh 20, 27, 39) bt Bagalkunte FC 0; Bangalore Phantom FC 4 (S. Karthick 6, Ginneithang Gangte 21, Ashish Kumar 36, Lokkho Reziio 60) bt Misaka United 1 (P.P. Rishad 46).

Taparia slots in Roots FC's winner

Roots FC edged out Belgaum United FA 1-0 in the KSFA Karnataka under-21 youth premier league football league.

The results: Roots FC 1 (Karan Taparia 77) bt Belgaum United FA 0; BPSSS FC 2 (Kishore Gowda 43, Rishi Naidu 73) bt NEYFC 1 (Tharun Chandran 87).

Chirag bats well in PESCA's win

Chirag recorded a half century to help PESCA defeat Just Cricket Academy in the Tiger Cup under-16 tournament.

The scores: Just CA 79 in 19.4 overs lost to PESCA 81/2 in 7 overs (Chirag Harsha 60).

Holy Saint 270/5 in 30 overs (Arnav Manchale 65, Gaurav 60, Brahmanya 49) bt Carmel HS 145 in 25.5 overs (C. Nithin 30, Preet 28, Gaurav 4/24, Swayam Shabadi 4/33).

Play Smart 197/9 in 30 overs (Mandar Pai 62, Pratham Bhat 31, Hrishi Manjunath 28, Mohith Gowda 3/25, Banbihariharan 3/31) lost to Kapil CC 200/5 in 27.2 overs (Mahir 86, S.N. Chirayu 3/21).

Koramangala puts it past Vanguards

Koramangala BC took out Vanguards BC 94-68 in the State 'B' division men's basketball league.

The results: BOSCH 79 (Sumit 20, Pavan Kumar 18) bt YMMA 55 (Prabhat 31, Prashant 17); Koramangala BC 94 (Panial 21, Shivam 13) bt Vanguards BC 68 (Avinash 16, Naveen Kumar 14); MNK Rao BC 67 (Rinal 17) bt Devanga BC 46 (Sudeendra 13); Vimanapura BC 69 (Aditya Ponappa 17, Dev Mishra 14) bt BOSCH 54 (Alok Nair 15, Pavan Kumar 12); Bharath Sports Union 102 (Akshay 20, Navaneeth 21) bt YMMA 60 (Prabhat Tomar 19).

Chebet breaks 10,000m world record, Kerr beats Ingebrigtsen

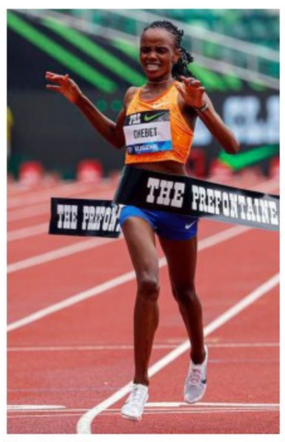
DIAMOND LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
EUGENE (USA)

Kenya's Beatrice Chebet shattered the 10,000m world record and World champion Sha'Carri Richardson won her first 100m of the Olympic season, clocking 10.83sec, at the Eugene Diamond League on Saturday.

The victory, in which she improved on the previous record of 29.01.03 set by Ethiopian Letesenbet Gidey in 2021, immediately stamped her a favourite in Paris, even though it was her first elite race at the distance on the track.

Richardson, who won the world title last August in her personal-best of 10.65sec, was coming off a pair of sluggish 200m performances in China.



Chebet. AP

But she signaled her intentions with the second-fastest time of the year behind American Jacious Sears's 10.77 in April and came out on top.

There was a marquee matchup in the meet's signature Bowerman Mile, where 1,500m World champion Josh Kerr held off Olympic gold medallist Jakob Ingebrigtsen by 26-hundredths of a second

Britain's Kerr clocked 3:45.34 to seize the win in the pair's first meeting since Kerr stunned the Norwegian at the Worlds in Budapest in August.

In other events, American Christian Coleman, the 2019 World champion, won the men's 100m in 9.95sec, coming out of the blocks strong then holding off Kenyan Ferdinand Omanyala, who was second in 9.98.

Kenneth Bednarek tuned up for the US trials with a dominant win in the 200m in 19.89sec.

France's Cyrena Samba-Mayela won in the 100m hurdles, matching her national record of 12.52.

Grant Holloway of the USA won the 110m hurdles in a world leading 13.03sec.

Kenyan Daniel Manteiko booked his trip to Paris with a victory in the men's 10,000 in world-leading 26:50.81.